POLICY Review

OCTOBER & NOVEMBER 1999, NO.97

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MILITARY SUPREMACY AND HOW WE KEEP IT
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BEYOND "ANCIENT HATREDS"
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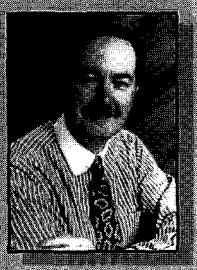

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Policy Review (ISSN 0146-5945) is published bimonthly by The Heritage Foundation, a research and educational institute that formulates and promotes conservative public policies based on the principles of free enterprise, limited government, individual freedom, traditional American values, and a strong national defense. For more information, write The Heritage Foundation, 214 Massachusetts Avenue NE, Washington DC 20002 or visit www.heritage.org. Periodicals postage paid at Washington DC and additional mailing offices.

The opinions expressed in *Policy Review* are those of the authors and editors and do not necessarily reflect the views of The Heritage Foundation.

Policy Review is designed by Mitzi Hamilton for Bird-in-Hand Productions.

EDITORIAL AND BUSINESS OFFICES: Address letters to *Policy Review*, 214 Massachusetts Avenue NE, Washington DC 20002-4999. Telephone: 202-546-4400. Fax: 202-608-6136. Email: polrev@heritage.org. Internet site: www.policyreview.com. Direct advertising inquiries and reprint permission requests to Leslie Gardner. Reproduction of editorial content without permission is prohibited.

SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION: Contact *Policy Review*, Subscriptions Department, 214 Massachusetts Avenue NE, Washington DC 20002-4999, or call toll-free 1-800-566-9449. Foreign subscribers call 202-608-6161. For address changes (allow six weeks), provide old and new address, including ZIP codes. Postmaster: Send address changes to *Policy Review*, Subscriptions Department, 214 Massachusetts Avenue NE, Washington DC 20002-4999. Subscription rates: one year, $36; two years, $72; three years, $108. Add $10 per year for foreign delivery. U.S.A. newsstand distribution by Eastern News, Inc., One Media Way, 12406 Route 250, Milan OH 44846-9705. For newsstand inquiries, call 1-800-221-3148.

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The Schools They Deserve

Howard Gardner and the Remaking Of Elite Education

By MARY EBERSTADT

OUR POSTMODERN TIMES, it is often observed, are rough times for orthodox belief. But religious beliefs aren't the only ones being put to the test these days. Certain established secular creeds, too, seem to be taking their lumps.

Consider the ostensible fate of one particularly long-running such orthodoxy, educational progressivism. It is true, of course, that classrooms across the country continue to exhibit progressively inspired practices, from "natural" ways of teaching math to "whole language" rather than phonetic reading methods; true, too, that one of the doctrine's most cherished dicta — its preference for "critical thinking" over what is disdainfully called the "mere" accumulation of facts — is enshrined in the heart of almost every teacher and embedded in textbooks and teaching plans from kindergarten on. All this has long been so, and must bring some consolation to the rank and file.

But it is also true that educational progressivism, in practice and in theory, is fast losing ground. For almost two decades, in fact, that particular set of ideas — grounded in Rousseau, transplanted in America by John Dewey and his followers, and disseminated through the educational establishment by generations of loyal acolytes ever since — has suffered what must only appear to the faithful as one ignominious setback after another.

There was, to begin with, that famous — some would say infamous — 1983 report by the National Commission on Excellence in Education,

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Mary Eberstadt is consulting editor to Policy Review. *Her last article in these pages was "Why Ritalin Rules" in the April & May 1999 issue.*

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America at Risk, documenting the distinct mediocrity of the nation's students and by corollary the impressive failings of its schools. These failings, certain observers were quick to point out, had risen more or less exactly alongside the ascendance of progressive ideas in the public schools. At the same time, and even more annoying to progressives, such critics were turning out to have echoes at the highest levels of politics. After 12 years of Republican governance — including most notably William J. Bennett's tenure as secretary of education — "standards," "testing," "achievement," and other terms regarded by progressives as ideological fighting words were once more in national circulation.

Yet even that much in the way of public criticism, one suspects, could have been comfortably countenanced by the flock; they had, after all, grown accustomed in the course of their long history to challenges from traditionalists of different stripes. But then, as the 1980s wore on into the '90s, came an outpouring of influential books and articles from critics who could not possibly be written off as tools of reaction. Some of these claimed sympathy with progressivism's aims while dissenting from what had been committed in its name. For these critics, what mattered was not the "otherwise unassailable precepts" of progressivism, as the historian Diane Ravitch once put it, but the fact that these precepts had gotten twisted around in practice to become "justification for educational practices that range from the unwise to the bizarre." It was a message that reached an ever-wider audience of the concerned, as the statistics on everything from reading to the SATs piled up worse by the year.

Hirsch did more than deplore the excesses of progressivist practice; he attacked the creed itself head-on.

But the harshest blow to progressive ideas, and what ought to have been the most demoralizing, came in the even more unexpected form of the writings of literary scholar E.D. Hirsch. A Gramsci-quoting, self-described political liberal, Hirsch did more than deplore the excesses of progressivist practice; he attacked the creed itself head-on, and on moral grounds to boot. In 1987, his profoundly influential book *Cultural Literacy* argued that progressive ideas in the schools were depriving all students, particularly those least advantaged, of the knowledge required for citizenship and a decent life. Some years later, in *The Schools We Need and Why We Don't Have Them* (1996), Hirsch went even further, arguing in meticulous detail that "the mistaken ideas" of progressivism had led to "disastrous consequences," and that "since mistaken ideas have been the root cause of America's educational problems, the ideas must be changed before the problems can be solved." Whatever the educational establishment may have made of all this was of little moment next to Hirsch's actual resonance with readers across the country. The ideas in his books — along with his

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Core Knowledge Foundation and its grade-by-grade, content-laden K-6 curriculum — effectively laid the groundwork for what was, and is, an anti-progressive educational counterculture.

Nor is that all. What must have been even more galling to progressives, priding themselves as they do on the tradition's claim to speak for the common man, is that during the same years in which their creed itself was being thrashed in the middle and higher reaches of public opinion, millions of people who had never even heard of Rousseau or Dewey turned out to be busily repudiating their legacy down below. This is the real meaning of what is often referred to as "the ferment in American schools." For almost two decades now, alarmed by all the same things that alarmed the authors and readers of *America at Risk*, parents and school boards across the country have seized on one educational experiment after another in the hopes of improving the schools — experiments that by their very design send shudders through the enlightened heirs of Dewey.

The progressivist tradition has endured a drubbing for nearly two decades now with little more than the occasional flinch.

Many districts and states, for example, have opted for mandatory standardized testing. They have, further, adjusted the curriculum to cover the contents of those exams — in the deploring phrase of progressive educators, "teaching to the test." Other districts are experimenting with financial incentives that these same educators also deplore — merit pay for teachers, school vouchers for disadvantaged families. Some schools have completely reconfigured their courses according to exactly the sort of fact-based learning progressives most heartily oppose; some 400 schools across the country, for example, the vast majority of them public, now claim to be based in whole or in part on Hirsch's Core Knowledge program. Finally, and just as dramatic, is the fact that still other parents have voted for standards and content with their feet by fleeing to the burgeoning rolls of private and parochial schools or — in a phenomenon that progressively-inclined educators barely even mention, so much does it affront their first principles — into the also-burgeoning home school movement, now numbering some one and a half million students.

It is all the more curious, then — it is in fact a puzzle begging for solution — that in the elite circles of higher education where the progressivist tradition still burns bright, the public drubbing their doctrine has endured for nearly two decades now has induced little more than the occasional flinch. In these circles, quite unlike those school districts across the country now noisy with democratic experimentation, an altogether different atmosphere reigns. Here, the very innovations for which many in the public clamor —

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vouchers, school choice, charter schools, standardized tests, and all the rest — continue to be designated, when they are mentioned at all, as reactionary or nostalgic exercises in discontent. Here, the ideas of the progressive tradition's sharpest recent critics, above all those of Hirsch, continue to be dismissed with genteel contempt. Here, as anyone can see, the long-running doctrine of progressivism continues to reign serenely, exactly as if the rising tide of criticism and the mass defections into enemy territory were not shaking the philosophy's throne to its foundations. All of which suggests that this may be a particularly opportune time to examine what form progressivism now survives in, and the source of that form's appeal.

"First among equals"

LIKE ANY OTHER successful academic orthodoxy, including others that have come to be rejected by the ordinary people in whose name they were devised, the tradition of educational progressivism has never lacked for friends in high places. Indeed, it is no exaggeration to say that in the professional world of education itself, the doctrine has a near-perfect monopoly on academic prestige. One highly eminent figure in this world is Theodore Sizer, chairman of the Education Department at Brown, whose Coalition of Essential Schools project includes over 200 high schools organized according to progressive principles — student "exhibitions" rather than tests, an emphasis on "habits of mind" rather than accumulation of knowledge, a passion for relevance (one class recently studied *Othello* for its parallels to the O.J. Simpson trial), and so on. Many other figures less well known bring a similar cast of mind to related experiments and projects. And, of course, given the ideological homogeneity of the field, these like-thinking educators often work together, with the largest and most heavily funded of their projects typically collaborative efforts.

Yet if, in this collegial world, a single figure could be said to be "first among equals," as James Traub put it recently in the *New York Times*, or "the premier American scholar addressing educational reform," in the words of the like-thinking Sizer, it would have to be psychologist and celebrity intellectual Howard Gardner — professor of Cognition and Education and adjunct professor of Psychology at Harvard University; adjunct professor of Neurology at the Boston University School of Medicine; co-director since the early 1970s of Project Zero at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, whose many programs and institutes continue to attract educators from all over; author of some 18 books and hundreds of articles; and recipient of 12 honorary degrees and "many honors," as his latest book jacket copy puts it, including but hardly limited to a 1981 MacArthur fellowship. Gardner's ubiquity both inside the world of education and out almost challenges description. He is a leader in more projects and studies than can be listed here, a steady contributor to tomes from the

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higher journalism to the specialized literature on down, and a fixture on the lecture circuit (he delivers some 75 talks a year) whose professional interests span everything from classical music to studies of the brain damaged, political advocacy to developmental psychology, oversubscribed teacher workshops at Harvard to a more recent sideline in corporate consulting.

Daunting though it may be to contemplate, this resume does not even begin to convey Gardner's overriding influence in one particular realm of American education, and that is the world of elite private schools. Today, more than any other single figure, he seems poised to leave his stamp on a generation of students at many of the country's most prestigious schools.

Gardner's influence has a surprising history, as he himself has written and other reports agree. In 1983, the story goes, Gardner published what is still his best-known and most influential book, *Frames of Mind*. There, he challenged the professional convention of dividing intelligence into verbal and mathematical forms, and insisted instead on the existence of seven (he would later say eight, and is now equivocating about a ninth) separate "intelligences" of "equal priority," those being the mathematical-logical, linguistic, spatial, bodily kinesthetic, musical, interpersonal, and intrapersonal. Dense and jargon-ridden, as well as mildly esoteric — its main target, as Gardner has written, was Jean Piaget's conception of intelligence as scientific thinking — *Frames of Mind* was executed, and indeed intended, for a limited scholarly audience. "I believed," as the author himself put it later, "that my work would be of interest chiefly to those trained in my discipline, and particularly those who studied intelligence from a Piagetian perspective."

Gardner seems poised to leave his stamp on a generation of students at many of the country's most prestigious schools.

The professional world, for its part, was unconvinced. As Gardner accurately summarized the book's reception later, "a few psychologists liked the theory; a somewhat larger number did not like it; most ignored it." In the *New York Times Book Review*, psychologist George Miller pronounced the theory "hunch and opinion"; in the *New York Review of Books*, meanwhile — where Gardner's own essays on subjects inside and out of his chosen fields are frequently featured — psychologist Jerome Bruner praised the book for its timeliness, but went on to conclude that Gardner's "intelligences" were "at best useful fictions."

And these were just the friendly critics. In *The Bell Curve* (1994), to no one's surprise, Charles Murray and Richard J. Herrnstein dismissed Gardner as a "radical" whose work "is uniquely devoid of psychometric or other quantitative evidence." Yet others with no visible dog in the fight over intelligence turned out to echo the charge. Robert J. Sternberg of Yale observed that "there is not even one empirical test of the theory"; Australian specialist

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Michael Anderson complained similarly that "the scaffolding is the theory." Though some put their kindest face forward, praising the author of *Frames of Mind* as "brilliant" and his thesis as "original" or "powerful," few of his professional peers would venture, then or since, that anything Gardner was up to amounted to science. Piaget, at least so far as the professional world was concerned, did not stand corrected.

Nonetheless, there was one audience-in-waiting positively electrified by Gardner's message, and it was moreover enthusiastically indifferent to the book's scholarly critics. That audience, as it turned out, came from the ranks of private school administrators and teachers. As Traub put it last year in the opening of another article on Gardner, this one for the *New Republic*, "Howard Gardner first realized that he had struck a chord in the national psyche when he gave a speech to private-school administrators on his new theory of 'multiple intelligences' and saw the headmasters elbowing each other to get into the hall." Gardner himself recalls the moment with dramatic detail in his 1993 *Multiple Intelligences: The Theory in Practice*:

Few of his peers would venture, then or since, that anything Gardner was up to amounted to science.

> Some months after the publication of *Frames*, I was invited to address the annual meeting of the National Association of Independent [i.e., private] Schools. . . . I expected the typical audience of fifty to seventy-five persons, a customary talk of fifty minutes followed by a small number of easily anticipated questions. Instead . . . I encountered a new experience: a much larger hall, entirely filled with people, and humming with excitement. It was almost as if I had walked by mistake into a talk given by someone who was famous. But the audience had in fact come to hear me: it listened attentively, and grew steadily in size until it spilled into the hallways on both sides of the room. . . . [A]fter the session had concluded, I was ringed by interested headmasters, teachers, trustees, and journalists who wanted to hear more and were reluctant to allow me to slip back into anonymity.

The event that proved a turning point in Gardner's personal life would also mark a turning point for his admirers in the tonier schools. Today, as if in vindication of the judgement of those enthusiasts who catapulted his ideas to celebrity heights, Howard Gardner bestrides their world as no other single influence or figure of inspiration. In addition to his omnipresence on the lecture circuit, Gardner's books and videotapes and software are in constant demand (his CD-ROM tour of the intelligences sells for $435 for a set of five); his workshops for teachers and other educators at Harvard are early sell-outs; and hundreds of schools now claim, in varying degrees, to have

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remade themselves in keeping with multiple-intelligence theory. And though some of those schools are public — there is no shortage of funders or educators interested in trying Gardner's ideas — there can be no doubt that it is the private school world, today as in 1983, that is clamoring for multiple-intelligence products, paying for Gardneriana, and conforming their classrooms to his dicta. Indeed: In what may be the single most telling detail of Gardner's influence in the world of elite education, Traub reports that "when the directorship of one of New York's most prestigious private schools recently came open, almost every candidate for the job mentioned Gardner in his or her one-page educational-philosophy statement." In sum, as one educator put it to Traub, "Howard is the guru, and *Frames of Mind* is the bible."

Progressivism, properly understood

If so, the holy writ has now been enlarged once more, and the reader curious as to what the private schools are clamoring for need look no further. For this year Gardner has published yet another book, *The Disciplined Mind: What All Students Should Understand* (Simon & Schuster, $25.00). Unlike *Frames of Mind*, which as we have seen reached the general reader only inadvertently, *The Disciplined Mind* takes no such risk; it is overtly aimed at "individuals" — indeed, "individuals all over the world" — who "care about education." Here, the author promises with typical sweep, he "seek[s] to synthesize over thirty years of research in the cognitive and biological sciences, and over fifteen years of involvement in precollegiate education," to find the features of "good educations . . . everywhere in the world."

Somewhat incongruously, progressivism's most visible public defender opts here for an Olympian tone. He is "weary," he explains, "of debates that array one educational philosophy against another." Though it is true, he elaborates later, that "much of what I write about can be identified with the educational tradition of John Dewey — with what has been called progressive or neo-progressive education," it is also true, as he acknowledges, that this tradition has become a code word in the minds of some for low or no standards and poor work. In that sense, Gardner writes, "I reject the baggage that has . . . come to be associated with this label." Contrary to what critics have suggested, "one can be progressive while also espousing traditional educational goals and calling for the highest standards of work, achievement, and behavior." This book, in the author's telling, is a statement of that other progressive philosophy, progressivism properly understood — not the old and tarnished version of yesteryear, but a kind of souped-up version, a muscular version, a kind to which even conservatives and traditionalists, or so the author seems to hope, might warm.

Where does this new progressivism lead? The answer is something of a

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mystery, at least at first. For Gardner is also "weary," as it turns out, of what he calls the "instrumental or momentary" issues in education today — issues like "vouchers," "charter schools," "teachers unions," "local control," "national standards," "international comparisons," and all the quotidian rest. Such issues, Gardner argues, "skirt the most fundamental question" of the purposes of education itself. These purposes he identifies as a "quartet" across "educational time and space": "to transmit roles; to convey cultural values; to inculcate literacies; and to communicate certain disciplinary content and ways of thinking."

Alongside this quartet of purposes, the author simultaneously outlines a "trio of virtues" that "should animate education" — truth, beauty, and morality — and produces examples of how each of these realms might be approached. To gain an understanding of truth, he suggests, students might study the theory of evolution; of beauty, Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro*; and of morality, the Holocaust. These choices, the author readily acknowledges, are "time-bound," "place-bound," and even "personal"; they are not intended to signal a "fixed canon," which the author himself ardently opposes. One could easily substitute other instantiations in their place, he goes on to explain — for example, approaching truth through "folk theories about healing or traditional Chinese medicine," beauty through "Japanese ink and brush painting" or "African drum music," and good and evil through "the precepts of Jainism, the stories of Pol Pot and Mao's Cultural Revolution," or "the generosity of bodhisattvas." The point, it appears, is not to "privilege" any particular set of examples; not one is "sacrosanct," and in any event, Gardner writes, "I do not believe in singular or incontrovertible truth, beauty or morality." "No doubt," the author goes on to acknowledge, "there are various routes" to such understanding (later in the book, he will identify six such "pathways"); the one outlined here is merely his own "preferred path."

These choices are not intended to signal a "fixed canon," which the author himself ardently opposes.

Anyone reading this far into his argument may long since have started wondering what a curriculum — to say nothing of a lowly classroom — might look like when cut to the specifications of all these purposes, virtues, and pathways. But the reader must be patient; list-wise, we have only just begun. The Six Forces That Will Remake Schools are easy enough to digest (as is the by-now obligatory point that "changes in our world are so rapid and so decisive that it will not be possible for schools to remain as they were or simply to introduce a few superficial adjustments"). Similarly, the Six "most prominent ideas ushered in by the cognitive revolution" can be managed without headache. So can the Seven "mind and brain findings" that

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"ought to be kept in mind by anyone concerned with education," off the track of Gardner's main point though they may be.

It is when the author returns to his main subject that the conceptual challenge begins in earnest. For it turns out that there are not only Four Approaches to Understanding ("learning from suggestive institutions," "direct confrontations of erroneous conceptions," "a framework that facilitates understanding," and "multiple entry points"), but that the fourth of these, in keeping with multiple-intelligence theory, is itself subdivided into seven further categories (the entry points in question being narrative, numerical, logical, existential/foundational, aesthetic, hands-on, and interpersonal), *and* that room must be left for metaphor, similes, model languages, and other means of making sense of the consequent "multiple representations of the Core Concept."

What all this means for the classroom is anybody's guess, but what Gardner himself says it means looks something like this: A "narrative entry point" into the subject of evolution, for example, might be the story of Darwin's voyage on the Beagle, or the tale of his fellow evolutionist and grandfather, or the saga of the Galapagos finches. A "numerical entry point" might be a study of the beak size of the same finches. Other entry points might include, say, breeding fruit flies ("hands-on"), watching a documentary ("aesthetic"), or recreating the debates that followed publication of Darwin's theory. Similarly, the *Marriage of Figaro* might be studied via the human struggles it contains (existential-foundational), comparison of meter and rhythm in two arias (numerical), or performing parts of the score (hands-on). As for the Holocaust, one might, say, study the history of artists persecuted under Hitler (aesthetic entry point), read the literature of survivors (existential-foundational), or focus on a specific event such as the Wannsee conference (narrative). A classroom designed by Gardner, in other words, might do all these things — or it might, even more important, do none of the above; we are reminded repeatedly, as he puts it toward the end, that "these choices are illustrative only."

We are reminded repeatedly, as he puts it toward the end, that "these choices are illustrative only."

Well, so be it. Now, if the content of such an education is indeed ad hoc, arbitrary, in permanent flux, then we can only evaluate that education by means of its methodology. About that methodology Gardner is quite clear — he favors "depth over breadth," (pursuing a small number of topics rather than conveying large amounts of information); "construction over accumulation" of knowledge (an emphasis on personal questioning rather than memorization); "the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake over the obeisance to utility"; "an individualized over a uniform education" (a preference that allows "the natural inclinations of the human individual to

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unfold and endure"); and "student-centered" rather than "teacher-centered" education (meaning that students join in the process of "assessing" themselves). Personal relevance, student-led classrooms, hands-on, performance-oriented activities — does any of this sound familiar?

> "Learning by doing" was a central element in the . . . curriculum . . . [as were] educational methods that discarded the mere accumulation of knowledge and made learning a part of each student's life, connected to his or her present situation and needs. These were schools of the future . . . because they exhibited "tendencies toward greater freedom and an identification of the child's school life with his environment and outlook."

The description here comes from Diane Ravitch in *The Schools We Deserve*, and she is quoting John Dewey. The year in question is 1915.

The shock of the old

In sum, the vision on which Gardner insists so passionately in *The Disciplined Mind* is not exactly new. It is, in fact, older than most people now alive, as was demonstrated most elegantly by the progressives' nemesis, E.D. Hirsch, three years ago in *The Schools We Need and Why We Don't Have Them*. Gardner, of course, is profoundly aware of Hirsch's opposing perspective, which he describes in his latest book as "a view of learning that is at best superficial and at worst anti-intellectual." (That's when Gardner is minding his literary manners. On the lecture trail, he prefers the jab of "Vanna White knowledge.") Yet it is an interesting fact that Gardner, for all that he describes his own latest book as part of a "sustained dialectic — read disagreement," with Hirsch himself, in fact mentions his adversary only a few times, while *The Schools We Need and Why We Don't Have Them* appears not at all.

Interesting, but not at all surprising. For that last book of Hirsch's, *predating* Gardner's though it did by three years, uncannily provides the intellectual genealogy of just about every tenet of *The Disciplined Mind*, most of them presented by the author as if they were thought up just yesterday.

"Changes in our world are so rapid and so decisive," Gardner's argument begins, "that it will not be possible for schools to remain as they were." "The claim that specific information is outmoded almost as soon as it has been learned," writes Hirsch in *The Schools We Need and Why We Don't Have Them*, "goes back at least as far as [William Hearst] Kilpatrick's *Foundations of Method* (1925)." Subject matter, Gardner argues, should not be "privileged"; what matters is that education be centered on the child rather than the subject. "Dewey's words, disposing of the polarity between child-centered and subject-matter-centered education," Hirsch observes after quoting them, "were published in 1902." What of the concomitant idea —

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also part of the "child-centered" curriculum — that testing amounts to "spitting back" material, and that children should instead "construct" answers for themselves? "The campaign against giving students tests," Hirsch explains, "is an integral part of a Romantic progressivism that goes back to the 1920s. . . . [O]rthodox educational doctrine since the 1920s has been consistently opposed to testing and grading."

And so on, and on — and on. The superiority of "hands-on" experimentation versus "drill-and-practice" teaching, the importance of "individual differences," "learning styles," and an "active learning environment"? These buzzwords and all they represent, the nuts and bolts of *The Disciplined Mind*'s imagined classroom, turn out to date to an exceedingly influential document published by the Bureau of Education and called *The Cardinal Principles of Secondary Education* — published in 1918. The main focus of this document, as it happens, was an attack on the idea — one resonating these 80-plus years later in Gardner's arbitrary trio of evolution, Mozart, and the Holocaust — that subject matter per se should anchor a curriculum. "This hostility to academic subject matter," writes Hirsch, "has been the continued focus of educational 'reform' ever since *Cardinal Principles* — a tradition that needs to be kept in mind when current reformers attack 'mere facts' and 'rote learning.' "

Just as what is significant in The Disciplined Mind *is not new, so its particular novelty is not terribly significant.*

Just as what is significant in *The Disciplined Mind* is not new, so its particular novelty — that architectonic of trios, quartets, sextuplets, and septuplets of principle, intelligences, and entry points and all the rest — is not terribly significant. In fact, the most vaunted part of that architectonic — the identification of the multiple intelligences, and the insistence on a curriculum intended to elicit all of them — is, unfortunately for the rest of Gardner's argument, its weakest link.

Consider only what multiple-intelligence theory forces him to say about one of his own chosen subjects, the teaching of the Holocaust. No one could object to the reading of survivor stories, say, or to an in-depth look at Eichmann's trial in Israel in 1961, or to reviewing the literature on the Wannsee conference. But the insistence that these are mere "entry points" for certain kinds of "intelligences," entry points no more or less "privileged" than any other, will not stand up. It is very difficult to accept that the author himself believes it. After all, the Holocaust could also be "entered" through a study of, say, how concentration camps boosted local employment rates. Would Gardner really sanction that approach, rather than appear to "privilege" conventional sources?

Even worse are the tortured passages where the cumbersome require-

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ments of his theory force him to invent other "entry points" aligned to the more avant-garde "intelligences." It is hard, for example, to read under "interpersonal points of entry" his assurance that "The Holocaust provides many opportunities for role play" without a twinge of uneasiness. Occasionally, one feels the strain of his material stretching round his theory to the ripping point — as in his admission that "when it comes to the relationship between the Holocaust and artistry, one must tread carefully," or in the howler, "Hands-on involvement with the Holocaust must be approached carefully, especially with children." To say that the multiple-intelligences approach runs the risk of trivializing serious subjects — a risk Gardner briefly acknowledges here — is one thing. But to advance beyond those claims about entry points to say that it does not even matter *whether* the Holocaust is taught, much less how, is to enter a zone of relativism where few readers would care to follow. Clearly, Gardner expects good taste to govern the classroom. But this preference must go unspoken, since to introduce it is to open the way to objective "standards" and other rigidities he disavows.

For all the reassurances and talk of "rigor," no ways and means are introduced here that would translate these terms into accountability.

What, finally, of the author's promise to deliver progressivism with a difference? For all the reassurances ("I am a demon for high standards and demanding expectations"), for all the talk of "rigor," "high standards," and the rest, no ways and means are introduced here that would translate these terms into accountability — none, that is, beyond the upholding of "regular assessments," and what that means is anybody's guess. As James Traub put it pointedly in the *New York Times Book Review*, "One would like to ask Gardner, an erudite and wide-ranging thinker, if that was how school equipped his own mind."

Gardner, of course, would protest that such ideas have never really been tried. "Educational experimentation" in this century, he believes, "has occurred chiefly on the margins"; progressive educators "have had relatively little impact on the mainstream of education throughout the contemporary world." The argument that something has never been tried, that last gasp of exhausted ideology, is in this particular case quite wrong; the Everyclass all these educators love to hate — one with "prevalent lecturing, the emphasis on drill, the decontextualized materials and activities ranging from basal readers to weekly spelling tests," as Gardner puts it — has been out of fashion and in many schools stigmatized, apparently without the progressives' ever having noticed it, for decades now. To the extent that it is reviving in American schools today, it is on account not of the establishment education-

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al culture, but of a counterculture that is now declaring, whether overtly like the educational reformers or tacitly through the many experiments now under way in the schools, that a hundred years of progressive experimentation is enough.

To each, according to his means?

IT APPEARS, then, that progressive educational ideology has come full circle. Born near the turn of the century in hopes of raising the downtrodden up, it survives now as the ideology of choice of, by, and for the educational elite.

Indeed, it is increasingly recognized as such. Consider this comment by Nathan Glazer, writing last year in the *New Republic* of the sharply opposed visions of E.D. Hirsch and progressive educator Theodore Sizer. "The question of what's best for the classroom," Glazer concluded, "may simply be a matter of class — social class. In some schools, with some students, one can teach for understanding and depth. . . . For others — frankly and regrettably — there are no such things." Gardner, similarly, for all his talk of an "education for all human beings," notes that "for those disadvantaged children who do not acquire literacy in the dominant culture at home, such a prescribed curriculum [as that recommended by Hirsch and others] helps to provide a level playing field and to ensure that future citizens enjoy a common knowledge base." Progressivism, it appears, is not for the weak — or the backward, or the poor.

So what's in it for the elite — all those headmasters and teachers and parents still elbowing their way into Gardner's lectures? Why the enduring appeal to them of progressive ideas? Three sorts of explanations come to mind.

The first is institutional. The means by which academic ideologies perpetuate themselves have been closely studied elsewhere; the particular case of progressive ideology has probably been explained best, again, by Hirsch in *The Schools We Need and Why We Don't Have Them*. Almost all the leading figures in the field of education — all the most prestigious institutions — are considered, and consider themselves, heirs to Dewey's tradition. This fact is important. It means, for example, that graduate students seeking out the "best" schools and professors will find themselves educated — and, of course, penalized or rewarded in their professional lives — by people imbued with the ideas that overwhelmingly dominate these schools. It also means that teachers, headmasters, and others who pride themselves on staying au courant will likewise gravitate to the same ideological home base.

A second way of explaining progressivism's latest lease on life is more prosaic, and concerns those on the consumer end of private education. In a review of Gardner and his ideas for the *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, Robert Holland recently quipped that multiple-intelligence theory "encourages the

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egalitarian delusion that we all are utterly brilliant in equally important ways," thus providing "an escape route from accountability." He is, of course, absolutely right; that "delusion" is the main source of the theory's very human appeal.

On any bell curve, after all, half the results will fall below the norm; *somebody* is going to be in that bottom quintile, or two quintiles, and so on. Now, parents everywhere have a natural aversion to thinking their own child is average or worse; from the parental point of view, as the Russian joke has it, every baby is a "normal genius child." Add to that natural aversion the fact that, at the upper reaches of the private school world, some parents are paying $10,000 to $14,000 a year per child; these sums alone are a powerful disincentive against giving parents bad news. Many parents send their children to private school, after all, precisely so that they do not have to worry about their education. Grades and standardized tests are a constant reminder that problems might still surface at any time. Thus, private school parents, possibly more than others, may be susceptible to multiple-intelligence-style ideas that emphasize the talents of their children, while not putting those talents on the line in any way that will rouse parental concern. There is also, of course, no denying the fact that classrooms like these have always had a certain snob appeal. Grades and tests, they imply, are for the ordinary kids; no means of measurement could do justice to ours.

Placing their bets on the most advantaged children, progressive educators can hardly lose.

But there is a larger, more sociological explanation for the success of such a vision in the private schools today, an explanation that ought to make progressives themselves uncomfortable if they ever take occasion to reflect on it. For the fact is that in placing their bets on the most advantaged children — those children of the kind of people who have taken multiple-intelligence theory to heart — progressive educators can hardly lose.

How could they? Teach those children Inuit and Swahili all you like; they, unlike their less advantaged counterparts, will pick up the French or Italian or whatever they need when the time comes for travelling abroad. Withhold from them all that distasteful factual information with no fear of penalty — most of them, again unlike their less fortunate fellows, will pick up the facts from their reading and conversation outside the classroom. Deny them, if you like, geography; they will find, say, Madrid or the Euphrates from the airport when they get there. Refuse to administer tests — excepting of course the intelligence tests so tellingly required by almost every private school in the land — again, with impunity; most of them will have individual tutors for the SAT and AP exams when the time comes.

All of which is to say that when the children of today's Gardner- or Sizer-

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influenced schools go on from strength to strength later in life, that fact will tell us very little about the intrinsic worth of progressive ideas or the merits of the classrooms where those ideas roam free. All success will prove is that the overwhelming advantages with which most of those students are blessed — the homes packed with books, the money that makes travel and other forms of personal enrichment a fact of life, the literate and high-functioning parents and peers, the expectations and, for many, the genetic advantages with which they are born — amount to more human capital than any classroom, including mediocre and worse ones, can reduce by much.

Viewed this way, the revival of progressive ideas among elite schools and students may seem a harmless enough experiment; and so, from the perspective of those particular individuals, it probably is. All the same, this ideological renascence has its dark side. The more the private schools tack to the wind — abolishing grades, eradicating tests, and otherwise disposing of the instruments that have traditionally allowed worse-off students the means by which to elevate themselves — the harder it will become for any child to join those schools except through accident of birth.

After all, they will not be able to join them by dint of hard work; the curriculum is constantly in flux, so there is nothing to prepare for. Nor will their graded schoolwork elsewhere grant them entrée; this merely proves they have been "force-fed" facts. As for more subjective measures, like a teacher's recommendation — well, that teacher was almost certainly not trained according to theory; she probably just was "privileging" certain kinds of performance in the usual suspect way. The school without recognizable assessments and a fixed curriculum — the school of which progressive educators, today or yesterday, continue to dream — is a school stripped of handholds from below.

As for the poor and disadvantaged themselves — well, as enlightened voices are now saying, let them have Hirsch. Come to think of it, the implied contest there has a certain charm. Let the games begin.

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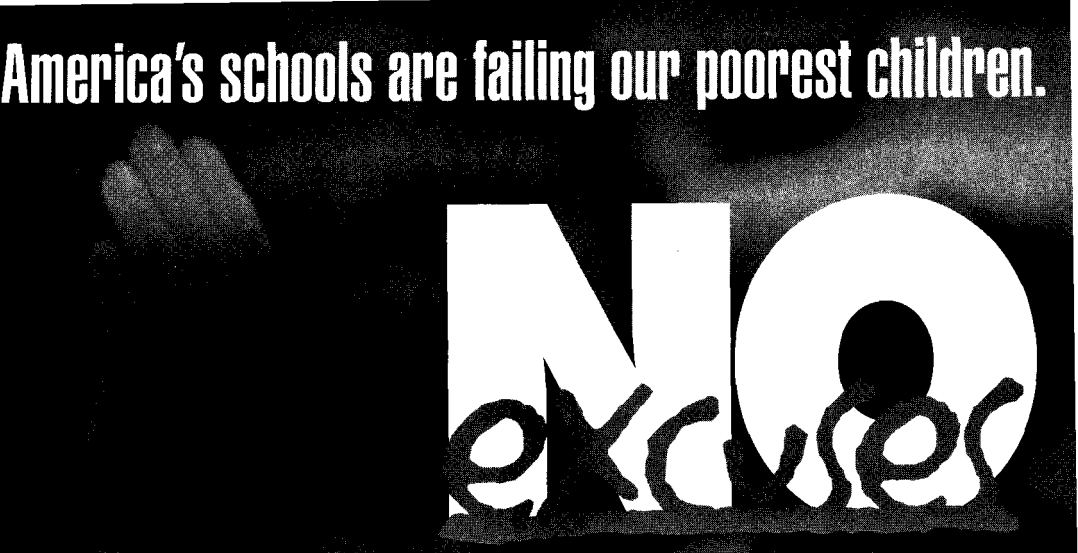
America's schools are failing our poorest children.



58 percent of low-income 4th graders cannot read. 61 percent of low-income 8th graders cannot do basic math.

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Military Supremacy And How We Keep It

By LOREN B. THOMPSON

IN FEBRUARY 1776, only months before the American Declaration of Independence, British historian Edward Gibbon published the first volume of *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. It was almost immediately recognized as an important achievement. Gibbon, like no one before, discerned the sources of Rome's early success and later failures over the course of a history spanning a full millennium. The sixth and final volume appeared in 1788, the year before the U.S. Constitution. Not surprisingly, several of the framers of the Constitution thought they saw lessons in Gibbon's work for the new republic. George Washington was particularly impressed with an insight about Roman military power that Gibbon offered in the first chapter of the first volume:

> The terror of the Roman arms added weight and dignity to the moderation of the emperors. They preserved peace by a constant preparation for war; and while justice regulated their conduct, they announced to the nations on their confines that they were as little disposed to endure as to offer injury.

When he became president, Washington paraphrased Gibbon's lesson in

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his first annual message to Congress, observing that "to be prepared for war, is one of the most effectual means of preserving peace."

It was not a lesson that his fellow countrymen or their descendants would learn easily. Over the following two centuries, the nation's vital interests would be endangered repeatedly by lack of military preparedness. But in the second half of the twentieth century — the "American Century," as Henry Luce called it in 1941 — the United States emerged as a global military power without peer. As that century ends, America commands more power and influence than perhaps any nation since the halcyon days of Gibbon's Rome.

The sources of American success are not primarily military in nature. But after a century in which democracy was endangered first by imperialism, then by fascism, and finally by communism — a century in which over a hundred million lives were lost to war and civil strife — most Americans can readily grasp the value of possessing global military supremacy. The United States certainly has that today. Its defense budget is bigger than the combined total for the six next-biggest military powers (most of whom are U.S. allies). It is the only nation that can project military power rapidly and decisively anywhere on earth; the only nation with a major military presence in both hemispheres; the only nation exploiting the full military potential of the information revolution; and the only nation that anyone seriously expects to deserve the title "superpower" in the early decades of the next century.

History is strewn with the remains of great civilizations that lost the capacity to protect themselves.

If the United States can sustain the economic and cultural sources of its success, America has the potential to preserve its global influence for a long time to come — perhaps for as long as Rome did. But that also depends upon sustaining its current military supremacy. History is strewn with the remains of great civilizations that lost the capacity to protect themselves from external challenges. The hard part for America, as for Rome, seems to be maintaining a sense of purpose when threats recede. Given enough time, Americans are masters of military mobilization and execution. Where they have proved wanting is in preserving their might during periods of peace.

Despite an imposing defense budget, there are signs that the U.S. military posture is losing the coherence of its Cold War years. In an international environment posing few direct threats, it is quite possible to imagine a gradual deterioration, born of inattention, continuing past the point at which real damage to the U.S. global position occurs. Now, in short, is the time to think about where and why erosion is occurring and what investments the United States must make in order to preserve global military supremacy during the first half of the next century.

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Current national strategy

BEHIND U.S. MILITARY FORCES in the field is a complex analytical process. Planners specify vital national interests and the threats to them; they formulate a strategy for coping with those threats; they identify the military requirements of implementing the strategy and translate the result into a range of programs to provide necessary personnel, equipment, and support services. In order to understand the investment programs — the equipment and technology expenditures — that must be made over the next generation, one must first spend a little time on the earlier stages of the process.

The Clinton administration has seen fit to rethink each step in the national security planning process, arguing that the demise of the Soviet Union required reflection on how future security needs might differ from those of the Cold War. The administration called its new approach a "strategy of engagement." Proponents characterized it as a middle ground between the extremes of isolationism and assuming the role of global policeman. The military component of this strategy was explained in the report of the Quadrennial Defense Review, a comprehensive assessment of U.S. military needs completed in 1997. The review specified five "vital national interests" that are the starting point in defining national military requirements:

- Protecting the American homeland, especially against attacks employing nuclear, chemical, or biological "weapons of mass destruction."
- Preventing the reemergence overseas of hostile regional powers or coalitions.
- Guarding the security of global lines of communication at sea, in the air, and in space.
- Ensuring unfettered access to key markets, energy supplies, and strategic resources.
- Deterring and/or defeating aggression against allies and friends.

The defense secretary's 1999 *Annual Report* identified major near-term "security challenges" (i.e., threats) to U.S. interests:

- "Large-scale, cross-border aggression" by hostile regional powers such as Iraq and North Korea.
- "Flow of potentially dangerous technologies" to overseas adversaries, particularly technologies relevant to weapons of mass destruction, information warfare, or space access.
- "Transnational dangers" such as terrorists and drug cartels that operate with little regard for national borders.

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- "Threats to the U.S. homeland," including nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, information warfare, infrastructure attacks, organized crime, and uncontrolled immigration flows.
- "Failed states" such as Somalia and Zaire, where the collapse of effective government has allowed the spread of lawlessness and disorder.
- "Adversary use of asymmetric means," in other words, enemies' exploitation of novel tools and tactics to circumvent superior U.S. conventional forces.

The administration does not anticipate the emergence of a "global peer competitor" comparable to the old Soviet Union prior to 2015. Its strategy of countering the emergence of regional aggressors is clearly designed to discourage such a development. However, Defense Secretary William Cohen acknowledged in his 1999 *Annual Report* that China could one day become a superpower rival of America, and also noted the possibility of "wild card scenarios," meaning completely unexpected threats for which the U.S. is poorly prepared.

Virtually all of the key features of current U.S. conventional forces are in some way linked to the two-wars metric.

The defense strategy formulated to deal with these interests and threats has three basic goals. The first is to shape the global environment by promoting regional stability, mitigating tensions, and deterring aggression, so as to diminish the frequency with which U.S. military forces must be employed. Efforts to reduce the Russian nuclear arsenal, halt the spread of ballistic-missile technology, and deprive international terrorists of safe havens are key features.

The second is to be prepared to respond militarily to a full range of possible crises. U.S. military forces must be able to deter aggression or coercion; engage in a variety of smaller-scale, possibly protracted contingencies in widely scattered locations; and successfully prosecute two "nearly simultaneous major theater wars," such as Operation Desert Storm. The latter requirement is the main driver of current force structure. Smaller-scale contingencies require less capability, and the standard for determining whether forces can effectively deter is inherently subjective. Virtually all of the key features of current U.S. conventional forces — number of armored divisions, number of long-range bombers, number of naval surface combatants — are in some way linked to the two-wars metric. The administration envisions that most major theater wars will be conducted in concert with allies, but acknowledges that the U.S. must be prepared to act alone.

The third basic strategic goal requires the military to think beyond 2015

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— the planning horizon for the force posture proposed in the Quadrennial Defense Review — in an exercise called "preparing now for an uncertain future." Neither the administration nor the military claims to know what the global security environment will look like after 2015. The services describe the forces they will need then as "capabilities-based" rather than threat-based, acknowledging that they can only guess at who the enemy might be. The focused modernization effort called for in this part of the defense strategy is driven by the so-called "Revolution in Military Affairs," the anticipated transformation in military capabilities made possible by new information technologies. It is also in this futuristic context that the Quadrennial Defense Review discusses national missile defense, describing it as an "insurance policy" against unanticipated threats.

Three fundamental flaws

THE CLINTON ADMINISTRATION'S defense strategy is more coherent than many critics acknowledge. It identifies the full range of plausible future threats to national security and has shown a capacity to evolve over time in response to changing circumstances. Nonetheless, the strategy has three fundamental flaws that make it an incomplete basis for any road map of future defense investments. First of all, it provides no real solution to the most serious and persistent security threat the nation faces, the danger of nuclear attack against the American homeland. Second, it makes assumptions about the circumstances under which future conflicts might arise that are too optimistic to assure military supremacy over the long run. And third, even within the context of neglected threats and convenient assumptions, the strategy does not yield a force structure or capabilities adequate to satisfy its own requirements.

The first flaw is clearly the most important, reflecting the peculiar blindness of Democratic administrations throughout the Cold War to the likely impermanence of nuclear deterrence. U.S. nuclear strategy today, as in the past, depends upon the presumed validity of an unprovable theory of human behavior. The strategy assumes, inter alia, that nuclear adversaries will be rational; that they will not be accident-prone; that they will prevent rogue elements from seizing control of strategic forces; that they will perceive U.S. actions as intended; and that they will respond to U.S. actions in the manner American policy makers consider appropriate. There was little historical basis for such heroic assumptions during the Cold War, and there is even less in its aftermath, especially given the volatile character of Russian domestic politics and the emergence of new nuclear players.

The only valid excuse for allowing national survival to rest on such a fragile base is the absence of alternatives. That was the main argument of those opposing national missile defense during the Cold War — that protection against nuclear attack was not practicable, and that efforts to provide it

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would make attacks more likely by "destabilizing" the superpower security relationship. In the years after the end of the Cold War, defense became both more feasible and more necessary. The number of strategic warheads in the Russian nuclear arsenal declined by a third during the 1990s, to around 7,000; some U.S. intelligence analysts believe that the arsenal will deteriorate to less than 1,000 usable warheads by 2010 (far below levels permitted under pending arms control agreements). Defense may accordingly be easier, especially if attack comes in the form of a limited — accidental or unauthorized — nuclear launch. But the same internal decay driving down warhead numbers also makes nuclear accidents, security breakdowns, and proliferation more likely. With the assumed stability of the Cold War era gone, active defense becomes more necessary.

Current strategy assumes that two major conflicts will not occur at exactly the same time.

Fortunately, significant technological progress has been made in developing systems that can counter nuclear missile attacks, particularly the smaller-scale attacks that might be mounted by emerging nuclear powers or rogue commanders in Russia. After cutting back on national missile defense research during its first term in office, the Clinton administration began to warm to the idea of relaxing the severe constraints on missile defenses imposed by the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty. But its defense strategy reflected little sense of urgency about developing defenses, and the administration's public pronouncements were often fraught with misplaced emphasis, leaving the impression, for example, that the primitive ballistic missile threat posed by North Korea was more ominous than Russia's 7,000 intercontinental warheads. An adequate strategy for defending the nation must begin by addressing this challenge more seriously.

The second fundamental flaw in current strategy is the tendency to make convenient assumptions about how future warfighting contingencies might arise. Current strategy assumes that two major conflicts will not occur at exactly the same time; that well-armed allies will probably participate in major theater wars; that extensive infrastructure will be available in or near conflict areas to support U.S. forces; that early suppression of enemy air defenses will be feasible; and that adequate supplies of precision munitions ("smart bombs") will be available to quickly disable critical enemy assets.

For all the military success of the Western alliance's air offensive over former Yugoslavia, several of these assumptions proved wrong. The Air Force began running out of key munitions only a week after the air war began. Uncertainty about whether enemy air defenses had been disabled hobbled the use of U.S. aircraft. And European allies proved ill-equipped to participate effectively with U.S. forces in a precision air campaign. (One senior U.S. military officer was quoted in the press commenting acidly, "We slipped some training wheels on the Europeans and put them in the middle of the

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freeway; after a few days, we said, 'we better get these kids out of the road.' ")

Even the assumptions that proved valid in Kosovo raised troubling questions about how U.S. forces would fare in future conflicts. For example, the absence of major conflicts in Northeast Asia and the Persian Gulf region enabled the Pentagon to remove the only U.S. aircraft carrier in the Northern Pacific as well as electronic-warfare aircraft enforcing the Iraqi no-fly zones to support the Kosovo operation. But since the current U.S. force posture was constructed around scenarios envisioning "nearly simultaneous" conflicts in both Northeast Asia and the Persian Gulf, how likely is it that U.S. strategy will be adequate to deal with contingencies in other areas such as the Balkans in the future? What would have happened if U.S. forces were under pressure in both Iraq and Korea — a real possibility — when the Kosovo operation began? And while U.S. forces operating over the former Yugoslavia did indeed have access to nearby infrastructure in allied countries (they used two dozen bases), Europe is the only major theater of military operations where base access is not declining over time. In the Persian Gulf region, even key allies such as the Saudis have expressed ambivalence about U.S. use of bases there. Obviously, a defense strategy grounded in excessively optimistic assumptions has the potential to go seriously awry in the years ahead.

This leads to a third fundamental flaw. Even within the context of neglected threats and optimistic assumptions, the Clinton administration's strategy never properly translated into support for the programs necessary to implement it. Indeed, the administration made a number of foolish program choices. For example:

- The Clinton administration limited production of the stealthy, next-generation B-2 bomber to 21 aircraft, a fraction of the originally-planned 132 planes. The Air Force does not plan to produce another new bomber until 2037, leaving it with a force of barely 200 intercontinental bombers for the next 40 years — 90 percent of which are not stealthy, and over a third of which (the B-52s) are already nearly 40 years old.
- Although the U.S. Army today leads the world in heavy-armor technology for the first time in history, it plans to cease upgrades to its M-1A2 Abrams tank early in the next decade and forgo any further tank production for a generation. The service has no firm plans as to when it will resume production of heavy-armor vehicles, and no funding allocated to provide the majority of existing tanks with the latest digital upgrades.
- Despite the growing versatility of submarines as stealthy platforms for sea control, land attack with cruise missiles, intelligence gathering, and other missions, the Navy's sub inventory was set to decline from 100 in 1990 to half that number. Internal Navy stud-

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ies indicate that 70 attack subs are needed to meet current commitments, but with many older subs approaching retirement, it is not clear the service can afford to keep even 50 operational.

There's no way of knowing precisely where such program trends will leave the U.S. military in, say, 20 years. But "global military supremacy" certainly isn't the first phrase that comes to mind. It's not clear the existing force posture can meet even the near-term demands of national strategy. Shortly after the end of the Kosovo campaign, Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Michael Ryan told an audience that, faced with two simultaneous major-theater conflicts, his service would experience shortfalls in intelligence collection, surveillance, defense suppression, airlift, fighters, and bombers. Ryan said the service could cope with the two "nearly simultaneous" conflicts envisioned in current strategy — as long as an accommodating adversary allowed him to begin shifting assets to the second conflict 90 days after the first one began.

If that is the state of U.S. military preparedness today, imagine where the U.S. will stand after the full effects of no bomber production, no tank production, and minimal submarine production have asserted themselves for a generation — not to mention dozens of other key military investments delayed, deferred, or diminished by recent administrations. Barring some miraculous change in human nature, it is clear that a much more ambitious investment program will be needed to assure U.S. military supremacy in the early decades of the next century.

Critical investments ahead

A REALISTIC INVESTMENT STRATEGY for future military supremacy must begin by recognizing some basic realities: America's geographical remoteness from likely theaters of military involvement; the undependability of key allies, who may lack the resources or resolve to participate in coalition warfare; the ongoing proliferation of advanced military technologies, including those related to weapons of mass destruction; the uncertainty of future access to overseas bases; and the traditional reluctance of Americans to sacrifice their fellow citizens' lives in wars with limited or unclear objectives. Current U.S. defense strategy acknowledges many of these constraints but does not respond adequately to them.

An effective military investment plan must leverage the nation's extraordinary economic and technological power to compensate for other strategic disadvantages the United States faces. The Clinton strategy is correct in asserting that well-trained, well-led personnel are the U.S. military's most important asset, but other nations also have competent warriors. Where they cannot match America is in the scale and sophistication of military

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technology. The U.S. thus requires a technology-intensive defense strategy to assure future military supremacy, one which is more heavily weighted toward investment than driven by readiness, as during the Clinton years. Almost all of the critical investments can be organized to support five overarching goals:

- Developing homeland defenses against nuclear attack.
- Preserving global air superiority.
- Asserting unrivaled dominance in space.
- Securing and leveraging the benefits of global maritime supremacy.
- Exploiting the full military potential of the information revolution.

Homeland defense

THE CLINTON ADMINISTRATION BEGAN stressing the importance of preparing the nation for future attacks involving chemical or biological weapons. Planning for the protection of critical infrastructure against information warfare has begun. The administration has even acknowledged that the emergence of nuclear-capable rogue states such as North Korea may soon require deployment of national missile defenses.

These efforts are all worthwhile, and probably should be accelerated. However, the administration's approach to defense against nuclear attack, while an improvement over its earlier positions, cannot begin to cope with the full range of nuclear threats to the American homeland. The current concept is to construct a very limited system of sensors and interceptors that at least initially would be compatible with the 1972 ABM Treaty and its 1974 protocol. This would limit the system to 100 interceptors at a single, fixed domestic site, which the administration believes could be adequate to counter the small, relatively simple attacks mounted by a North Korea. The system architecture is being designed so it can evolve into a more capable defensive network able to cope with somewhat larger or more capable threats, such as those that might be posed by an accidental or unauthorized launch of Russian missiles.

But the envisioned system will not be able to deal with a large-scale nuclear attack such as Russia could launch today, or China perhaps 10 years in the future. In fact, because four interceptors would be needed to provide 95 percent probability of destroying one incoming warhead, a fully treaty-compliant version of the system could be overwhelmed by only half a dozen multiple-warhead missiles. If the U.S. homeland is truly to be defended, a completely different approach is needed, one involving some form of boost-phase interception — in other words, destruction of missiles early in their launch sequence, before multiple warheads and penetration aids have

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been released. The only real candidate at present to accomplish this task is the Air Force's Space-Based Laser program.

Unfortunately, the Clinton administration allowed the laser program to languish. Plans for a space-based test of key technologies were delayed from 2005 to 2008, then to 2010, and now to 2012. Nuclear deterrence may fail long before the leisurely pace of the program produces anything useful. To make matters worse, congressional proponents of space-based lasers have contrived a series of excuses for delaying the Air Force's Airborne Laser program, a theater-missile defense system that will facilitate early demonstration of key enabling technologies. In short, the boost-phase interception component of the national missile defense program is in a state of disarray. The Ballistic Missile Defense Organization's entire budget for directed-energy technologies in the fiscal 2000-2005 defense spending plan is a mere $450 million.

The United States cannot reasonably claim global military supremacy so long as it is at the mercy of any nation with more than a handful of nuclear-armed ballistic missiles. Its present defenselessness is an incentive to adversaries to acquire nuclear weapons as a relatively inexpensive way of matching U.S. military power. The administration's plans for a treaty-compliant system are a good first step and a potentially valuable backup. But real security depends on infusing the Space-Based Laser program with a much greater sense of urgency, a conclusion congressional authorizing committees underscored in their conference report on the fiscal 2000 defense budget.

Air superiority

NO AMERICAN SOLDIER HAS BEEN KILLED by enemy aircraft since the Korean War. No American military plane has been shot down by enemy aircraft since the Vietnam War. And throughout the American Century — a period of history essentially coterminous with the age of air power — the American homeland has never been subject to a bombing campaign by foreign adversaries. These achievements have been made possible in large measure by what air power theorist Guilio Douhet at the beginning of the century called "command of the air."

Americans have enjoyed air superiority for so long that they have come to take it for granted. Few citizens fully grasp what an accomplishment it was to pound Serbia into submission without losing a single allied pilot or having to commit ground forces. But precisely because U.S. air superiority has come to seem so inevitable, there is a real danger that it could be lost sometime early in the next century. The Air Force's plans for a stealthy heavy bomber not dependent on forward bases were scaled back to a mere 21 planes, the only survivable long-range strike aircraft it now plans to operate for decades to come. The Clinton administration reduced scheduled production of the only new air-superiority fighter the Air Force has developed in

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the last quarter century, the stealthy F-22, from 750 planes to 648, then to 438, then to 339 — and finally, congressional appropriators in fiscal 2000 budget deliberations threatened the plane with extinction altogether. And because it had expected to have large numbers of stealthy next-generation bombers and fighters, the service abandoned its fleet of electronic-warfare aircraft, leaving the joint tactical jamming mission to the Navy.

Planners also cut the production goal for the service's next-generation strategic airlifter, the versatile C-17, by 40 percent and threatened the program with termination in the early 1990s. That program eventually got back on track, and the Air Force will probably buy close to the 210 planes originally planned. But in virtually every other category of aircraft — fighters, bombers, tankers, surveillance planes, tactical airlifters — the service operates an increasingly aged and decrepit fleet. High rates of utilization and low rates of production during the Clinton years accelerated the decay. If U.S. air superiority is to be assured during the early decades of the next century, three efforts in particular must receive increased funding:

The F-15 fighter that the F-22 will replace is a Vietnam-era airframe that cannot assure air superiority.

- Plans to upgrade the Air Force's 21 B-2 bombers should be organized to facilitate further production of long-range strike aircraft in the near future. Careful sequencing and management of programmed improvements would allow the service to develop a "virtual prototype" of a cheaper, more capable B-2 variant that could be produced in the next decade.
- Production of the F-22 must be kept on schedule to avoid huge costs and delays in fielding a next-generation air-superiority fighter. The F-15 fighter that the F-22 will replace is a Vietnam-era airframe that cannot assure air superiority against more modern foreign fighters, and the other tactical aircraft the U.S. is developing are not suitable for the air superiority role.
- The Joint Surveillance and Target Attack Radar System (JSTARS), a radar plane that does for ground surveillance what the AWACS does for air surveillance, must be upgraded and procured in sufficient numbers. The Clinton administration wrongly assumed allies would buy six for coalition operations, but since they haven't, the U.S. production goal should be restored to at least the original 19 aircraft (some senior Air Force officers think twice that number would be optimal).

The Air Force also needs to revitalize its electronic-warfare community

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and determine how it will replace hundreds of aging KC-135 tankers and C-130 tactical transports. These missions are not as well understood in Congress as the more visible combat missions, but they are critical to the Air Force's success in future conflicts. With access to foreign bases increasingly doubtful, the importance of range-extending aerial refueling tankers and rugged intratheater airlifters that can land almost anywhere will become increasingly apparent in the years ahead. But the average KC-135 tanker is 38 years old, and many C-130s are operating well beyond their intended design lives. They need to be replaced soon.

Space superiority

In the 40 years since the United States launched its first photographic reconnaissance spy satellite (the KH-2 in 1959), the U.S. military has become increasingly dependent on and proficient in the use of orbital space platforms. The most important military satellites are five constellations of early-warning, communications, navigation, and meteorological spacecraft operated by the U.S. Space Command; and a series of highly classified intelligence satellites such as the Orion electronic-eavesdropping system operated by the National Reconnaissance Office. The Air Force has traditionally been the lead military service for acquiring and operating space systems, often acting in concert with the intelligence community. However, all of the military services have become heavy users of these systems, even though the Air Force bears most of the budgetary burden.

The Soviet Union tried hard throughout the Cold War to keep up with America in the military utilization of space, but after losing an early lead during the Kennedy administration, it never again came close to matching the sophistication of U.S. orbital assets. The Russian military space program today is a pale shadow of its Soviet-era scale, unable even to provide national leaders with continuous early warning against nuclear attack. A handful of other countries such as France and Israel have established niche competencies in particular satellite types, but the U.S. remains by far the dominant producer and user of military spacecraft. This not only provides a critical advantage in global defense operations, but also is a key reason America leads the world in commercial satellite sales and technology. The U.S. will continue to dominate satellite innovation for the foreseeable future, unless overly restrictive export controls hobble the competitiveness of an increasingly commercial business.

The same cannot be said of the launcher segment of the space business, where the U.S. faltered badly after the Challenger disaster in 1986. Because the Space Shuttle was expected to replace traditional launchers in many roles, the U.S. spent relatively little on upgrading its expendable launchers once the shuttle program began. But the shuttle never lived up to the expectation that it would greatly reduce the cost of orbiting satellites, and after

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the Challenger exploded, most military payloads were returned to expendable launchers. A series of false starts on new launchers such as the "Advanced Launch System" and "National Launch System" then ensued, as the U.S. tried to improve a fleet that consisted of little more than modified variants of Eisenhower-era ballistic missiles.

This effort led eventually to the Evolved Expendable Launch Vehicle (EELV) program in the Clinton administration, a family of launchers that may finally solve the near-term need for cheaper, more reliable access to space. The EELV program is essential to effective U.S. space operations in the early decades of the next century. But by the time that program began to bear fruit, much of the domestic demand for commercial space launches had already moved offshore to France, Russia, and China. This process was accelerated by neglect in modernizing and expanding the U.S. launch infrastructure. If the United States is to maintain its present dominance in military, civil, and commercial space operations over the long run, it will need something more revolutionary than an evolved expendable launcher.

The leading candidate to serve as this "leap-ahead" space transportation system is VentureStar, a "single-stage-to-orbit" launch vehicle being developed by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration and several of the nation's largest aerospace companies. In conceptual terms, VentureStar will be a cross between the Space Shuttle and an aircraft, with reusable systems, aerodynamic landings, and quick turnaround on the ground. It will have a payload comparable to the shuttle, but much lower costs and higher reliability. The first commercial operations are forecast for 2005. Before two full-scale vehicles can be built, though, NASA needs to demonstrate key technologies on a smaller test vehicle designated the X-33 — probably beginning next year. Because reliable access to space at reasonable cost is the greatest single weakness in the current U.S. military space program, the X-33/VentureStar effort should arguably be the highest funding priority in any campaign aimed at bolstering space capabilities for the future.

Maritime supremacy

DIPLOMATIC HISTORIAN JOHN SPANIER once explained America's purported insularity from world affairs by observing that it was "a nation with nonthreatening neighbors to the north and south, and fish to the east and west." He might more accurately have said, "and the U.S. Navy to the east and west." During the nineteenth century, the Navy was the main bulwark against European intervention in the Western Hemisphere; in the twentieth century, it became the most frequently used instrument of American influence in the Eastern Hemisphere. The American Century, which began so portentously in 1907 when President Theodore Roosevelt dispatched the Great White Fleet on a cruise around the world, ended with the 97,000-ton, nuclear-powered aircraft carrier named

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for Roosevelt sitting in the Adriatic Sea, launching dozens of precision air strikes daily against the warmaking capacity of Serbia.

By the time the latter development unfolded in spring 1999, the U.S. Navy no longer had a real rival for global maritime supremacy. One by one, all of the other great naval powers of the twentieth century — Britain, Japan, Russia — had receded to the status of regional players. But the U.S. Navy no longer thinks solely in terms of such traditional missions as sea control. Since the end of the Cold War, the Navy and its sister service, the Marine Corps, have set forth an increasingly bold vision for using naval strike forces to intervene ashore. The new doctrine, first explored in a 1993 conceptual document called "...From the Sea," seeks to exploit the fact that most of the world's population and commerce are found within a few hundred miles of the sea — well within the range of sea-based aircraft and missiles. It fashions a post-Cold War role for the sea services that leverages their mobility, versatility, and independence to make them potent military forces far from the sea.

The U.S. Navy no longer thinks solely in terms of such traditional missions as sea control.

This is a potentially revolutionary development, one that may have great military significance in the next century if the U.S. continues to withdraw from land bases in the Eurasian littoral. With diminished access to foreign bases and a dwindling number of long-range strike aircraft in the U.S. inventory, there undoubtedly will be many overseas contingencies in the years ahead in which only the Navy and Marine Corps can respond with the requisite combination of speed and sustained firepower. But as the number of warships in the fleet shrinks to barely half its Reagan-era peak, the Navy has to make hard choices about what mix of vessels is best suited to implement its new doctrine of littoral warfare.

Aside from Marine Corps amphibious assets, the service seems to be evolving toward a mix of three next-generation warships: advanced large-deck aircraft carriers, multimission surface combatants, and versatile attack subs. In each case, the next-generation vessel will be expected to accomplish a broader spectrum of missions than the ship classes it replaces, while being much less manpower- and maintenance-intensive. New technologies such as electric drive and digital networks will enhance the efficiency of each vessel and will link ships, aircraft, and space assets together in an integrated warfighting system greater than the sum of its parts. Navy insiders call this a transition from "platform-centric" to "network-centric" warfare.

In doctrinal terms the revolution is already well advanced. The Navy knows what capabilities it is seeking in next-generation warships, and has begun development of all three classes. But there are challenges with each class caused by inadequate funding:

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Development of the New Attack Submarine ("NSSN" in naval nomenclature) has progressed to a point where initial production can begin. However, even though the versatile sub will be the only undersea warship produced for the foreseeable future — and may even be modified to serve as a successor to Trident strategic-missile subs — there is uncertainty as to whether the Navy can afford the annual build rate of two to three boats necessary to sustain an adequate fleet.

Development of a new destroyer, designated DD-21, is still in its infancy, but the vessel's diverse mission requirements — ranging from land attack to theater missile defense to antisubmarine warfare — are raising doubts about whether it can operate as planned with a much reduced crew of perhaps 100 sailors. This program may need increased funding to assure that all required capabilities are suitably integrated in time to commence production in the next decade.

Development of an advanced replacement for large-deck *Nimitz*-class aircraft carriers has been slowed by budgetary constraints, forcing the Navy to gradually introduce new design innovations over a period of many years. The consequences of this delay will be compounded by the Clinton administration's unwillingness to fund the necessary force structure of 15 carriers, which would require production of one new carrier every four years rather than five.

Providing coverage of U.S. strike aircraft during the Kosovo operation required shifting a third of assets to the Balkan theater.

In addition to these long-term challenges, there are two more pressing issues that the Navy must address soon. First, the aging EA-6B Prowler carrier-based electronic warfare aircraft, which provides tactical jamming for all U.S. military aircraft, must be replaced in the near future. With only a hundred such aircraft available worldwide on any given day and their average age approaching 18 years (production ceased 10 years ago), it is just a matter of time before lack of coverage leads to combat losses. Providing adequate coverage of U.S. strike aircraft during the Kosovo operation required shifting a third of available assets to the Balkan theater, leaving other regions thinly protected. Since it is too late to begin the lengthy development of a "clean-sheet" replacement aircraft, the only practical solution is to take advanced jamming equipment already in development for the Prowler and integrate it into a variant of the Navy's new strike aircraft, the F/A-18 Super Hornet. The Super Hornet will be the dominant fighter-bomber in the Navy inventory for the foreseeable future, so making it the host for electronic-warfare missions will minimize logistics costs and maximize air-wing flexibility.

The other pressing near-term issue is disposition of four Trident ballistic-

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missile submarines due to depart strategic service early in the next decade. These boats are in need of nuclear refueling and probably are no longer required for the deterrence mission. But their large size makes them well-suited for use as stealthy land-attack warships carrying cruise missiles. Modifying the subs for that mission would be an innovative and low-cost approach to bolstering the firepower for littoral warfare, but because it cuts across traditional mission lines, the service has not fully embraced the concept. Conversion needs to be funded while the option still exists.

The Marine Corps has made huge progress in recent years modernizing its aging collection of amphibious combat vessels. A class of eight very capable LHD amphibious assault vessels — they look like small aircraft carriers and cost over $1 billion each — will be complemented by a dozen new *San Antonio*-class vessels incorporating advanced design concepts and technology, leaving the service well positioned in terms of combat vessels for the next century. However, the corps faces major problems with an obsolescent aircraft fleet that have been exacerbated by Clinton Administration cutbacks in the planned production run and rate of the V-22 tiltrotor aircraft. The V-22 features the range and speed of a fixed-wing aircraft, combined with the vertical ascent/descent of a helicopter. It is the most important new aircraft the corps has purchased in two generations. The program needs to be restored to higher production goals at accelerated rates, before more Marines fall victim to their aging aircraft. The corps also needs to ensure that its next-generation Advanced Amphibious Assault Vehicle is adequately funded, because existing vehicles for transiting from ship to shore lack the range, speed, flexibility, and protection for littoral warfare in the next century.

Information revolution

THE FINAL OVERARCHING GOAL of an investment strategy for future military supremacy can be covered quickly, because it is not so much a mission area as a mindset. Virtually all of the advanced military systems and capabilities discussed above draw on new information technologies. From the pinpoint accuracy of smart bombs to the battle management of missile defenses to the superior connectivity of network-centric warfare, it is apparent that every facet of America's military posture is now permeated with digital processors and software. This is arguably the greatest military achievement of the Clinton years, a broadly based breakthrough in capabilities grounded in awareness that Cold War systems can be made much more effective through the insertion of new technology.

Over the next several decades, the armed forces must make a costly transition from the insertion of digital components to exploiting the full potential of the information revolution. But it is important to recognize that most of the major weapon systems that will be found in the force posture of 2020 have already been built today. The nation cannot afford to simply walk

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away from this vast investment in military hardware, and it doesn't need to. Innovative upgrades of older systems can keep many of them relevant to combat even as the full potential of the information revolution is being realized in a new generation of weapons.

Rather than permitting sharp discontinuities in capability as the result of a fitful transition to something fundamentally new, it is more prudent and affordable to gradually introduce next-generation weapons into a force structure where proven systems still have a place. That means systematically applying digital technologies across the force structure — and to its underlying logistics base — rather than reserving them for the "gee-whiz" weapons of tomorrow. The Clinton administration made a good start on this process, one on which future administrations should try to build.

The price of supremacy

DISCUSSIONS OF FUTURE MILITARY requirements lead inevitably to questions about affordability — particularly in periods of diminished danger, when the consequences of failing to modernize forces are less apparent. While the cost of the investment program set forth above would be considerable, some perspective on the scale and composition of current U.S. military spending is in order. Viewed in the light of post-Cold War threats, the scale of U.S. defense expenditures in the late 1990s was already quite imposing; at about one-third of the global total, it is many times the military budget of any existing adversary. But while dangers to democracy are at their lowest ebb in three generations, that situation cannot prudently be expected to last indefinitely. Moreover, much of America's current quarter-trillion-dollar annual defense budget is spent inefficiently on redundant bases, the high overhead costs of an all-volunteer force, and support functions that should long since have been contracted to the private sector.

If the Defense Department were operated according to the management standards prevailing at the nation's most competitive private companies, it would probably be feasible to accommodate the proposed investment agenda within planned budgets. Unfortunately, the Clinton administration's efforts to reform Pentagon management practices were mainly rebuffed by Congress. Furthermore, it is doubtful that government could ever come close to matching the efficiency of the marketplace, and even trying to do so might undercut popular support for defense spending. In any event, fundamental reform takes time, and after the depressed investment spending of the last decade, that is one thing the armed forces do not have. A program to preserve global military supremacy needs to be funded now.

That means political leaders must abandon the belief that they can enjoy sustained military supremacy for only 3 percent of gross domestic product, the level of defense spending prevailing in 1999. Some say, reform first. But

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insisting on "fixing" the Pentagon before major increases in military expenditure are approved would be like refusing to increase Medicare and Medicaid expenditures until those programs are reformed: Many people may die before the system is noticeably improved.

The good news is that U.S. economic activity is so robust compared with that of current or prospective enemies that global military supremacy can be sustained for only a modest additional increment of national wealth: on the order of 0.5 percent of GDP. The Congressional Budget Office estimated in July 1999 that U.S. gross domestic product in fiscal 2002 will for the first time surpass $10 trillion. Following Clinton administration guidelines, defense spending the same year is likely to total about $300 billion, matching its current 3 percent claim on national output.

A commitment to increase defense spending by an average of half a percent of GDP over the subsequent eight years would ensure military supremacy.

Fiscal 2002 (beginning October 1, 2001) is also the first full budget year for President Clinton's successor. It thus will be the critical year for establishing the tenor and priorities of a new administration. A commitment to increase defense spending by an average of half a percent of GDP over the subsequent eight years would ensure that all of the investment goals for future military supremacy described above could be met (so long as the new president's defense managers maintained a clear sense of their goals). It would enable the United States to begin rapid development of real homeland defenses, to bolster its global air and space superiority, to leverage the benefits of maritime supremacy, and to realize the full military potential of the information revolution.

Critics would undoubtedly complain that a defense budget increase ranging from $50 billion in 2002 to $70 billion in 2010 (assuming a $14 trillion GDP in the latter year) is excessive. In a limited sense, they might be right: Quickly increasing defense spending in the first year of a new administration could lead to waste. In the larger sense, however, they would be wrong. The share of national output allocated to defense would still be less than half the 7.5 percent average of the Cold War years. And because per capita GDP is so much bigger now than it was then, the sacrifice of average taxpayers would be smaller still.

It is important to keep in mind that the real (after-inflation) buying power of the U.S. defense budget has declined continuously since fiscal 1986. Increasing the defense budget by the equivalent of half a percent of GDP would barely restore its buying power to the level at which it stood at the beginning of the 1990s, long after the decline from the peak spending of the Reagan years had commenced.

But this still would be sufficient to meet the investment requirements of

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global military supremacy. One reason is that the Clinton administration programmed a 42 percent nominal increase in procurement spending into its fiscal 2000-2005 defense budget plan (from $53 billion to $75 billion in "then-year" dollars). Skeptics who remember the administration's repeated deferral of promised procurement increases in the mid-1990s were right to question whether this commitment would mean anything years after Clinton left office. But the plan is there, and a new administration has the option of building on it, not only by purchasing the sinews of long-term military superiority, but also by bolstering the readiness accounts that robbed procurement spending during the Clinton years.

So global military supremacy is affordable at a level of sacrifice that many citizens might hardly notice. In a nation that now spends 6 percent to 7 percent of national wealth on various forms of gambling, it hardly seems unrealistic to expect that half that amount might be spent on defense. After all, the alternative might be to suffer military defeat at the hands of an emerging competitor sometime in the first half of the next century. That may seem improbable today, but who foresaw the full extent of the danger that would be posed by fascism or communism in the early years after the Great War? Human nature has not changed. If no other lesson can be learned from the deaths of 100 million human beings in conflicts during the American Century, there is at least the one that lingers from the experience of Rome two millennia ago as well: Over the long run it costs far more to be unprepared for war than it does to be well-armed and ready.

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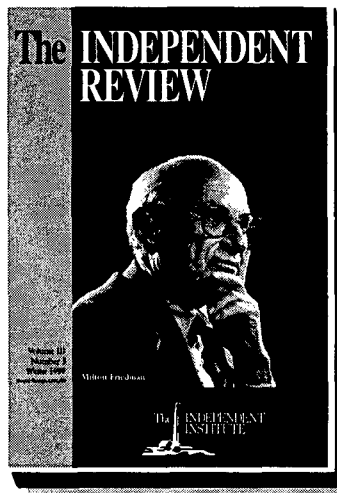

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Beyond "Ancient Hatreds"

What Really Happened to Yugoslavia

By STEPHEN SCHWARTZ

WITH THE DEATH OF DICTATOR Josip Broz Tito in 1980 and the crisis of European communism beginning a half-decade later, Yugoslavia — a "country" assembled after World War I from pieces of the former Austro-Hungary, Turkish possessions "liberated" in 1912-13, and the former monarchies of Serbia and Montenegro — came face to face with all the fault lines of the former states. As Yugoslavia broke violently into pieces in the 1990s, the first explanation on the lips of most commentators was this: "ancient hatreds," a phrase that quickly became a cliché.

Thus, viewers of television news as well as readers of print media were told for the *n*th time that the Serbs hate the Croats because of what the latter did to them in World War II; or, going further back, that the Serbs hate the Albanians for taking over Kosovo, which the Serbs consider their heartland because of the battle fought there in 1389. Or consider this:

> swift, on horseback, the barbarians ride to the attack;
> an enemy with horses as numerous as their flying arrows;
> and they leave the whole land depopulated.
> Some flee, and with their plowed furrows
> unguarded, know their fields will be despoiled.
> The poor products of their labor, in creaking carts
> are driven with their flocks, all the poor peasant owns.
> Among the refugees, some are seized as captives

Stephen Schwartz began writing on Yugoslavia in the San Francisco Chronicle. *He is completing a book on the Kosovo war.*

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and with their arms bound, march to an unknown fate;
they cast a sad eye behind them, at their homes and farms.
Some fall in agony, pierced by barbed arrows;
for the metal head of the shaft is loaded with poison.
What the barbarians cannot steal, they destroy
and a flame rages through the innocent houses.

Thus the Roman poet Ovid (*Tristia*, III, x.), describing a raid 2,000 years ago by the Sarmatians, considered Slavs by some historians, against the ancestors of today's Albanians.

The "ancient hatreds" argument furnishes a convenient hook for nightly news commentary on atrocities. It has certain obvious merits. It would be absurd to deny that the Balkans, like much of Eastern Europe, have remained outside the mainstream of European history, and that their penchant for brutality in politics and war indicates that, in some ways, some of these cultures remain unassimilated to Western values and attitudes. Further, it is clear that violence in the region has a repetitive character, going back even before the Slavic intrusion in the sixth century A.D.

In addition to its merits, the "ancient hatred" argument has a certain convenience for some of those who embrace it. It assumes, implicitly or explicitly, the moral equivalence of the warring parties, with "a pox on all your houses" its apparent policy corollary. This view has a natural appeal for those who do not wish to take sides.

But is the presence of "ancient hatreds," legendary resentments, and atavistic habits really sufficient to explain the extent and intensity of brutality in the Yugoslav war of the 1990s? This is somewhat akin to blaming Gothic paganism for Nazism. The distance from cultural divergence to mass murder remains a long one for most societies, no matter how backward.

No, these "ancient hatreds" could not and did not combust spontaneously. The blaze was prepared, lit, and stoked by the Serbian political leadership in a massive assault against its neighbors, planned and executed to unite "Great Serbia" behind its communist rulers. In pursuit of this end, Serbian ruler Slobodan Milosevic would effectively revive an authentically fascist style of ethnic incitement, one with a terrifying potential for the destabilization of European — and even international — civil society.

Moreover, there is no equivalence between Milosevic and the political leaders he confronted in Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and, eventually, Kosovo. The Slovenes under ex-communist turned free-marketeer Milan Kucan had consistently acted in only one interest: the efficient integration of the former Yugoslav "republics" into Europe. Croatian president Franjo Tudjman, as devious and corrupt a politician as Milosevic, kept his country in a kind of "banana republic" semi-dictatorship, imposed policies leading to human rights violations on its own territory as well as in Bosnia-Herzegovina, and often appeased Milosevic. But with all his many faults, Tudjman acted defensively and opportunistically. The Bosnian Muslims, for

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their part, never engaged in the wholesale human rights violations characteristic of Serbian and Croatian military operations. The Kosovar Albanians maintained a position of nonviolence for 10 years before they took up arms, though they faced a constantly rising level of Serbian police and paramilitary atrocities.

As for "ancient hatreds," the divergence between West and East, it is all too obvious, has marked the Balkans for 1,500 years. Yugoslavia represented an attempt, probably doomed to failure in any event, to bridge the gap. Laid over the bedrock of ethnic rivalry, however, a network of thoroughly up-to-date grievances was visible, though little noticed outside Yugoslavia. These resentments were perpetuated and exacerbated because of policy issues as current as any in the world. The real, immediate reasons Yugoslavia broke up so horrifically come not from the poetry of long-ago battles, or recitations of wartime atrocities under the Nazis, or from the plotting of German bankers or American militarists, but from the dry and seemingly sterile world of public policy. These reasons involve attitudes toward property and entrepreneurship; the legacy of centralist statism in government; and tax policy.

Yugoslavia at the time of its breakup was marked by the widely disparate levels of readiness among its constituent components for membership in the modern world. Serbia under Milosevic lagged far behind the others. The 1990s war and brutality in the Balkans were a product of Milosevic's decision to embrace war and brutality as the solution to the problem of Serbia's own backwardness.

Make war, not money

In a discussion early in 1999 with several American advisors resident in Bosnia-Herzegovina, a Bosnian Muslim professor of library science, Kemal Bakarsic of the University of Sarajevo, recalled his experiences in that besieged city in 1992. Bakarsic was employed at the National and University Library, which along with the Oriental Institute was shelled by the Serbs and burned for three days early in the war. In the week after, a fine ash like snow fell upon the city. Tens of thousands of Arabic, Persian, Turkish, Hebrew, and Bosnian manuscripts were destroyed, along with thousands of printed books and periodicals. Bakarsic himself, an expert on the unique cultural artifact known as the *Sarajevo Haggadah*, a Hebrew manuscript created in Spain and brought to Bosnia, was working at the library when the catastrophe occurred.

The world condemned the Serbian destruction of the Bosnian national library as an act of vandalism aimed at destroying the record of the Muslim presence in the Balkans. But Bakarsic's interpretation of this act of evil was distinctive; he saw it as driven less by ethnic hatred and an instinct for pure destruction than by a specific economic outlook. The Serbs, he said, mainly

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wanted to destroy the *defterler*, or Ottoman Turkish property registers. The aim of this, according to him, was not merely to wipe out proof that Muslims had once dominated the country, but, even more, to destroy evidence that Serbs had once held property alongside Muslims. "The *defterler* didn't just list the property of Muslims, but of Croats, Serbs, and others, as well," he noted. "They showed that coexistence between the three communities had always existed here. And they showed the extent of Serb property ownership, so that the Serbs were destroying their own history as well as that of the Muslims."

The destruction of Kosovar Albanian property records, along with personal identification and vehicle registration, was also a prominent feature of the recent Serb assault on Kosovo. But while the media universally viewed such actions as an effort to negate the legitimacy of the Albanian presence in Kosovo, they failed to see that behind the burning of property documents lay more than ultranationalism; there was also an historical and cultural attitude toward property in general. Very early in the Yugoslav conflict in the 1990s, some observers did point out the legacy of economic and social disparities between Serbia, on the one hand, and its original victims, Slovenia and Croatia, on the other. But because these differences were elusive, were obscured by the role of Serbia in controlling the Yugoslav economy, and led those who discussed them publicly to be condemned as anti-Serb if not racist, the topic was never pursued as it ought to have been.

The economic lag between Slovenia and Croatia, to the West, and Serbia, in the East, is the real source of the Yugoslav dilemma.

Nonetheless, the economic lag between Slovenia and Croatia, to the West, and Serbia, in the East, is the real source of the Yugoslav dilemma. And this gap, whatever its statistical configuration from year to year, grew out of certain long-standing cultural assumptions.

Consider only the briefest sketch of the former country's history. Yugoslavia spanned the West-East border delimited in 393 A.D. by the Roman emperor Theodosius, who divided the empire along the river Neretva. What would become, after the Slavic invasions, the Slovene and Croat lands was included in the Western empire; the much-later Serbia was in Eastern territory. Bosnia and the coasts of Montenegro and Albania were considered somewhere in the middle.

This cultural split would prove far more significant for the history of the Balkans than the later cleavage between Christian inhabitants and Muslim governors. The areas that became Slovenia and northern Croatia were absorbed into the domain of Charlemagne, fell under the ecclesiastical authority of Rome rather than Byzantium, and were swept (especially

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Slovenia) by Protestantism as well as the Counter-Reformation. The Croats of the Dalmatian shore came under Venetian rule, and, while distinguishing themselves as mariners and seaborne merchants, also participated in the penetration of the Slavonic world by the Renaissance. Both the Slovenes and Croats were ruled by the Habsburgs; they were briefly conquered and illuminated in the direction of revolutionary romanticism by Napoleon, but they were restored to Vienna and carried into the age of capitalism under the stewardship of Austrian and Hungarian industrialists. At the beginning of the twentieth century, Slovenia and Croatia had both produced wealthy peasant classes, prosperous commercial strata, and a healthy local tradition of trade and investment. Their future evolution as bourgeois nations seemed assured.

The cultural heritage of Serbia could scarcely have been more different. Having fallen under the Byzantine and later Orthodox religious order, Serbia never experienced a Reformation or Counter-Reformation. Essentially landlocked, it never fostered seamanship or foreign commerce. And then, in the fourteenth century, came what amounted to a wholesale disaster, at least from the viewpoint of European-style economic development. In the aftermath of the Kosovo battle, Serbia was conquered by the Turks. Trade in the Ottoman empire was concentrated on the imperial capital, the former Byzantium, and the caravan routes to Anatolia, Persia, and central Asia. To the west, the lesser Ottoman trade routes went from Venetian-Croatian Dubrovnik to Sarajevo in Bosnia, and from there, as well as from Shkoder and Durres in Albania, to Skopje and Selanik (Salonika) in Macedonia. Serbia, aside from Kosovo, which stood astride the Sarajevo-Salonika and Shkoder-Skopje routes, was largely passed by.

Serbia's commerce never developed beyond local trade, and, commensurate with that, a domestic business or investment class emerged only very late. Overall, Serb culture has treated warfare as the manly profession, preferable to commercial activity. Milosevic himself enunciated this view early in the 1990s in a speech directed against the Slovenes, who had enriched themselves by sublicensing Western consumer goods for sale to the Yugoslav market. Unlike the Slovenes, Milosevic declared defiantly, Serbs were not good at producing things — "but we are good at fighting," he asserted.

Serbia did not begin its break with Ottoman domination until 1804, and for long afterward, its economic character was Asiatic rather than European. In Slovenia and Croatia, and even in the Ottoman remnant of Bosnia, well-established ecclesiastical and political structures promoted the stability and expansion of farming; inherited land remained in the hands of the extended family, which sought to improve and expand its holdings. Although landless peasants emigrated from Slovenia and Croatia in considerable numbers, seeking their fortunes in, among other places, Gold Rush era California and, later, in the mines and factories of Belgium, France, and the American Midwest, those who possessed land held to it tenaciously, and organized

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associations and parties to defend their interests. In post-Ottoman Serbia, by contrast, the lack of an effective legal and social framework generated anxiety among the peasants, distrust within families, and ever-smaller divisions of landholdings among heirs. The Serb peasant defended his interests by maintaining a nuclear family on his diminished property, for which the physical labor of one's wife and children was the only available form of investment. Almost from the beginning of its national independence from the Ottomans, Serbia suffered a crisis in agriculture that continues even today.

Thus, the difference between West and East among Slovenes, Croats, and Serbs involved a great deal more than the theological argument over the authority of the bishop of Rome as pope, or the use of the Cyrillic as opposed to the Latin alphabet. For Serbs, property was most often a basis for conflict, either with family members or with landlords (the latter who had lately been Muslims), rather than for personal and collective improvement (except by violent expropriation of the same Muslim landlords). Entrepreneurship involved peddling and market haggling, and was suspect. When capitalism arrived in the Balkans the first time around, at the end of the past century, the Slovenes and Croats were well-prepared for it. But the Serbian bourgeoisie had arrived late on the historical scene, and its development as a class was also belated.

All of this was visible in embedded attitudes toward property. The burning of property registers was a symbolic expression of Serbianism, expressing not only a radical protest against the long Muslim domination, but also a deep ambivalence about the broader social and legal reality beyond the nuclear family. Not only were Ottoman land records suspect, as an institution of a foreign ruler; all records, all papers, all law outside that of the family became an object of mistrust.

The backwardness of Serbian agriculture, and Serbian hostility to post-traditional concepts of property, aggravated other problems caused by the belated entry of the Serbian bourgeoisie onto the stage of world history. But the irony important to foreigners, as well as Serbs, was that if Serbia had problems dealing with the first era of dramatic capitalist expansion into the Balkans, from 1850 to 1900, such problems were magnified beyond measure at the time of the most recent such expansion, in the 1990s.

Empty-handed in modern times

TITO'S YUGOSLAVIA, through the 1950s, '60s, and '70s, had flourished as the beneficiary of a kind of dual international welfare. Put simply, the Yugoslavs were paid by the Russians, in hard currency, for construction and other sophisticated projects Soviet socialism had failed to master, while the U.S. subsidized the Yugoslav military on the presumption that in a war between the Warsaw Pact and NATO, Yugoslavia would side with the West. Tito himself, a wily Habsburg military officer by profes-

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sional training, added two policy innovations, unknown to the rest of the communist world, to the mix. He encouraged Yugoslavs in the millions to emigrate — to Germany, Austria, Switzerland, even the U.S. and Australia, and to send as much of their earnings back home as they could. In addition, he threw the country open to foreign tourists, so that families, notably on the Dalmatian coast, could collect millions of D-marks in room rentals every year.

But the real basis of Yugoslavia's seeming success was dual subsidies from West and East. After the psychological defeat of Moscow by Poland's Solidarity and the Polish pope, John Paul II, in the early 1980s, something curious happened in Eastern Europe. Soviet Russia itself continued for some time on its triumphalist path, convinced that the global correlation of forces favored socialism, and that it could make up for what it might lose in Poland by subverting the American backyard in Nicaragua, Grenada, and El Salvador, as well as by its adventures in Africa and Southeast Asia. Hungary, East Germany, Czechoslovakia, and the other westernmost European communist states underwent, more or less rationally, the slow and steady emergence of a non-communist civil society. Nobody in Moscow, Budapest, East Berlin, or Prague spoke openly of the end of communism, just as nobody did in Washington. But in the former cities, the intelligentsia began hoping, silently, for a closure that had long been inconceivable.

The real basis of Yugoslavia's seeming success was dual subsidies from West and East.

In Yugoslavia, by contrast — particularly in Serbia — the 1980s produced the beginning of a real panic. Tito died in 1980, but few Yugoslavs felt fear, or expressed their fears if they had them, about the *internal* forces that might lead to the collapse of Yugoslav communism. Titoite communism was the most liberal, most open, most successful Marxist-Leninist regime. The onset of mass anxiety had little to do with immediate problems inside the country and everything to do with the awareness that, although the West had not seemed to notice it and the East would not say it aloud, Russian communism entered its death throes with the pope's survival of an assassination attempt. Bolshevism was doomed; and with the end of Bolshevism, Yugoslavia's dual international welfare payments would end as well. Russia would no longer need Yugoslavs to build factories and the U.S. would no longer need the Yugoslav Army as a bulwark against a Soviet invasion of Europe.

This realization struck the Serbs with special force because Serbia — in marked contrast to other parts of the former state — had little to bring to the table of what would eventually be called the "new world order." Slovenia, for example, would prosper even without support from Washington and Moscow; its local communist leadership had already given

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up Marxist economics, had integrated Slovenia with the Austrian and Italian economies, and, as previously noted, had made the country a producer of quality consumer goods for the rest of the Yugoslav market. Croatia, too, expected few problems in the absence of foreign aid; it had not only a spectacular and largely unexploited tourist potential, one whose transformation could be expected to fuel prosperity in the same way tourism remade Spain in the 1950s, but also a large diaspora that would continue to add to domestic income through D-mark (now euro) remittances. Even Bosnia-Herzegovina was relatively well-prepared for entry into the new world, thanks to the modernization of its agriculture and its links with the Islamic nations.

Aside from the superficial cultural sophistication of Belgrade, Serbia had very little to offer.

But Serbia? Aside from the superficial cultural sophistication of Belgrade, Serbia had very little to offer the new world. While Slovenia was producing computer peripherals and the Croats were planning resort hotels and the Bosnians were getting rich by exporting agricultural products, Serbia's economy rested on the major assets it had possessed since the beginning of monarchist Yugoslavia at the end of World War I: the Yugoslav state bureaucracy, the army, and the police. The only value added to this store of wealth by the Tito era consisted in communist-style state enterprises. And this bad situation was made even worse by certain educational disparities. For while Slovenes and Croats tended to get degrees in engineering, the hard sciences, and medicine, Serbs flocked to careers as state functionaries in the cultural as well as administrative fields. Indeed, Belgrade in 1989 may have had more unemployed structuralist film critics than any other city in the world.

It was raw fear for the future of a statist, centralist Serbia in a free-market world that transformed the Serbian communist organization into an agency of ultranationalist incitement to violence. The Slovene communists thoroughly and effectively remade themselves as free-marketeers, and the Croat and Bosnian Muslim communists were prepared to surrender power to elected non-communist parties, because they all knew they had professional, economic, and political options as something other than communist bureaucrats. That is, they were willing to exchange power for property; but for the Serb communists, loss of power meant loss of everything. There was no economic buffer to make the transition easier for them.

The Serb communists could not trust entrepreneurship, which they equated with corruption, and private property rights, which they associated with injustice, as the foundation of their future. Lacking assets in property, they were, again, nothing without power. But as we have seen in the statesmanship of Slobodan Milosevic, who came to embody their desperate hopes,

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they were not much even in possession of power. Milosevic, for his part, was not the inventor, but rather the instrument, of Serbia's "response" to its crisis, namely the attempt to unite Serbia by launching wars against its Western Yugoslav rivals. The real originators of this reaction, as it turns out, were literary intellectuals, including virtually all of Serbia's former professional dissidents and "humanist Marxists."

These included, for example, the novelists Dobrica Cosic, whose series of leaden narratives of Serbian suffering in World War I amounted to manuals for nationalist indoctrination, and Vuk Draskovic. Draskovic would later play the dissident card himself, but was originally known for a novel, *The Knife* (*Noz*), itself a febrile pamphlet justifying violence against Yugoslav Muslims. Its success as a best-seller in the mid-1980s was one of the first signposts in the direction of hell to appear in the country's common life. The main gambit by this layer of frightened intellectuals, however, was the so-called *Draft Memorandum of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts*, which was "leaked" to the press in 1986. In this document, Serbia's intellectual elite signed on to the theory that Serbia, which had ruled over Yugoslavia for 70 years, was actually an eternal victim of the more sophisticated, Westernized nations within Yugoslavia. The Belgrade press, once celebrated far and wide for its accuracy and independence in reporting on the Soviet bloc, became filled with paranoid propaganda about the threat of Muslim fundamentalists, Albanian gangsters, and recusant Croat fascists to the security of the Serb nation.

The Belgrade press, once celebrated far and wide for its accuracy, became filled with paranoid propaganda.

Indeed, the role of the Serb intelligentsia in the 1980s revival of ultranationalism was itself a sign of the disparity between West and East within Yugoslavia. Slovenia, by contrast, produced virtually no nationalist intellectuals. In Croatia, a generation of patriotic writers and political theorists — exemplified by the poet Vlado Gotovac, the publisher Slavko Goldstejn, and the civic activists Marko Veselica and Savka Dabcevic-Kucar — had distinguished themselves for their defense of Croatian literary and cultural claims. Gotovac, for example, had nearly been murdered in a Yugoslav prison, and Veselica was an internationally-known human rights figure. But when these Western-oriented Croat intellectuals saw Franjo Tudjman, the retired communist general whom they had once considered a dissident companion, turn in the direction of nationalist extremism, they took their distance from him and became leaders of the Croatian antinationalist opposition. No such phenomenon occurred in Serbia, which has yet to produce a repudiation of nationalism among its intellectuals.

The lesson of Serbian history is that political power in the hands of a weak and backward ruling class, one incapable of making itself an effective

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bourgeoisie, is much more harmful for the general interest than is a robust and self-confident bourgeoisie itself. Had they spent more time in comparative historical study, Western political scientists might have noticed ominous parallels with the case of Yugoslavia, in which the productive and entrepreneurial Slovenes, Croats, and Bosnians were ruled by a parasitical and anti-entrepreneurial Serbia. One such resemblance was to monarchist Yugoslavia up to 1941. But a far more disturbing precedent would have been Spain in 1936, where the industrialized Basque Country and Catalonia groaned under the statist, taxing regime of the economically stunted Castile — a Castile which, like Serbia, had historically exalted military careers over commerce. In Spain, of course, the disparity between the center and the periphery had contributed mightily to the coming of a civil war in which some 2 million people lost their lives.

The Serbification of everything

SERBIA ALSO RESEMBLED CASTILE in its Jacobin attitude toward nationality — its belief that all South Slavs, comprising Slovenes, Croats, Bosnians, Montenegrins, and, before 1945, Macedonians, should consider themselves, in their essential being, as Serbs. This conception reflects the impact of the French revolutionary-rationalist state on Europe and the widespread nineteenth century belief that large nation-states based on one "people" could be forged out of varying local identities. French centralist nationalism spread to Hungary, Germany, and Italy, and it was inevitable that it would profoundly affect the South Slavic region.

Thus Serb national ideologists of 150 years ago adopted the slogan of a folk scholar, Vuk Stefanovic Karadzic, who proclaimed, "Serbs All and Everywhere." In this theory, Slovenes and Croats were Serbs who had been Catholicized and Germanized; Bosnian Muslims were Serbs forced into Islam; even Macedonians, who spoke a Bulgarian idiom obviously distinct from Serbian, became Serbified. A faction of Montenegrins accommodated this theory by proclaiming their Serbianism as indistinguishable from that of Serbs elsewhere, even though, from a cultural and linguistic perspective, Montenegrins, Bosnian Serbs, Serbs from Vojvodina (then under Hungary), and Serbs from Serbia proper differ from one another as much as do Americans from Massachusetts, Louisiana, California, and Tennessee.

This inclusive Serbism might have succeeded had it been based on the essentially tolerant, melting-pot mentality that produced an American national identity. But it was not. Rather, it was based on ethnic narcissism: Only Orthodox Serbs deserved to exercise power in the South Slavic state created, it was said, by Serbs alone. Croats, by refusing to give up their Catholicism and their local traditions, were deemed traitorous agents of the hereditary Habsburg enemy; Bosnian Muslims, by cleaving to Islam, were obviously servants of the old Ottoman oppressor; Slovenes, who had never

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had a link with Serbia, were irrelevant marginals, sold out to the Vatican, who should be excluded from consideration if they would not bend the neck. And Macedonian nationalists, as well as the Albanians from Kosovo (the latter constituting the third largest national grouping in Yugoslavia from the beginning, in the 1920s), were terrorist interlopers who deserved only to be exterminated. Behind all this lurked a Serbian Orthodox theology that viewed Catholics and Muslims as demons, and even Macedonians and some Montenegrins (who were Orthodox but wanted their own churches) as schismatic rebels requiring punishment.

Long before France refined the concept of a single national identity defined by a centralist state, the Castilian monarchy in Spain spent at least 400 years attempting to assimilate the Basques and Catalans, with little success. Germany, although united in the late nineteenth century, had never seen a serious attempt to force the abandonment of local cultural identity; nor had Italy. And even in Jacobin France, Brittany and other regions proved extraordinarily resistant to forcible cultural homogenization. Serbia's leaders should have learned from these examples, but they ignored them. Instead, during monarchist Yugoslavia, before 1941, they chose as a model Greece, which imposed a national identity by expelling and killing Turks and forcibly suppressing its own Albanian and Macedonian minorities. After 1945, even as Tito broke with Stalin, Serbian communists looked to the Stalinist practice of compulsory Russification for inspiration in their treatment of, above all, the Kosovar Albanians.

Tito, who was half-Croat and half-Slovene, attempted at many turns to limit the power of the Serbian elite in Yugoslav public life. But he allowed Serbia to retain a traditional influence in the army, the police, and the state bureaucracy. After all, so long as Belgrade was the capital of Yugoslavia, no other outcome was very likely.

The lopsided Serbian domination of Yugoslavia, even under Tito, was visible in many places. In 1989, Yugoslavia's army was the fourth largest in Europe, and its officer corps was 70 percent Serb. Serbia relied on revenues taxed from the more economically productive regions to support its (largely Serbian) central government. Furthermore, every D-mark accumulated by the sale of Slovenian skis or the rental of rooms in Dalmatia had to go through the Belgrade banks, once again providing an opportunity for looting by taxation. In 1991, Milosevic rubbed the inequity of the situation into his subjects' faces when the Serbian central bank, which had already inflated the Yugoslav national currency almost beyond belief, unilaterally seized all the private foreign currency accounts in the country. It seems almost too obvious to mention that the prospective loss of tax revenue, with the prospect of greater Slovenian, Croatian, and Bosnian autonomy, was as much a stimulus to Milosevic and his men as any ethnic or religious issue.

Serbia's rage at such an eventuality was most visible in its destructive strategy toward the constitution of the Yugoslav Federation. For Serbia never acted to preserve the federation; rather, by refusing to surrender the

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rotating federal presidency to the moderate (and later anti-Tudjman) Croat Stipe Mesic, in 1991, Serbia forcibly liquidated the federation. This came at a time when Slovenia and Croatia still advocated a looser Yugoslav (con)federation rather than independence, and when the Muslims of Bosnia-Herzegovina, notwithstanding hair-raising Belgrade propaganda about Islamic fundamentalism, were clearly reluctant to consider the breakup of the existing arrangement.

To understand what happened in Yugoslavia, imagine a United States in which Maryland and Virginia, because they surround the national capital, tax the rest of the country to support their local budgets; in which only residents of those two states have any chance at a military career, and only historical figures from those states are publicly praised as national heroes. The consequences for America, one can speculate, would be no less bloody.

What Serbia had, and what it didn't

WHY, ONE MIGHT ASK, have the Baltic states, Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Slovenia survived communism so much better than Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, Slovakia, Romania, Bulgaria, and, of course, Serbia? The first and most obvious explanation is that Nordic (specifically, Scandinavian and German) economic penetration of the former brought about a certain irreversible progress. But that is an explanation freighted with risk for most Western intellectuals, who are loath to appear as defenders of Teutonic imperialism.

The second explanation, nearly as obvious, involves the role of Catholic and Protestant Christianity in promoting a certain limited, but nonetheless real, pluralism, which seems necessary for the development of enterprise. Greek and Slavonic Orthodoxy, by contrast, fits remarkably well with a totalistic view of nationality, as well as of the state. Orthodox theology posits the nation, the church, and the state as a single organ (much as Lenin viewed the proletariat, the Communist Party, and the "workers' state" as a single entity) — an outlook that is arguably an impediment to the cultural pluralism and entrepreneurship necessary for success in the modern world. How do we imagine changing such attitudes, held by many millions of people? Greece, the Orthodox exception, is entrepreneurial if not culturally pluralistic; this seems to suggest some alternative outcome is possible. But the Greeks, one also feels compelled to observe, were a maritime and commercial nation a thousand years before they became Byzantine and Orthodox.

The final enigma of the Yugoslav experience has to do with the Serbian view of modernity and of Serbia's own place within it. Serbia has always seen itself as a Balkan vanguard of the civilized, the contemporary, the progressive, and the modern. This conviction was visible no less in its adoption of Soviet socialism than in its embrace of Jacobin nationalism. But it also was an expression of the belated and handicapped development of the

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Serbian elite, which has always striven too hard to catch up with the world, and has always failed.

When Serbia set up public schools in which all instruction was in Serbian, and from which Kosovar Albanians withdrew their children, the attitude in Belgrade was one of righteous political correctness: "We set up free schools for them — they who don't want to educate their daughters anyway. We offered to teach them the Serbian language, part of the great Slavic family of millions of speakers, but they hewed to their reactionary, traditional culture!" Serbs were flabbergasted that Westerners would side with the "clannish, patriarchal, primitive Albanians" against the modern, urbane, sophisticated Serbs. During the Bosnian war, in an apparent paradox, Serb irregulars were urged to attack Bosnian Muslims with the argument that the Serbs' grandparents had been poor peasants in leather britches and barefoot, while the Muslims' forefathers were rich landlords whose wives wore silk pantaloons and velvet shoes. "Progressivism" and resentment of private property in Serbia, along with the cult of "anti-imperialist" national liberation, produced complete impunity in the robbery, rape, and mass murder of the "backward" communities.

Something necessary for success in the contemporary world was missing in Serbia, and the lack thereof undermined the Yugoslav project from the beginning. That something, which seems absent throughout the Eastern Slavic world, is elusive, and does not have a name that immediately springs to mind.

It is not a matter of a European outlook per se, because we see in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo that communicants of an "Eastern" religion, Islam, who hew to Ottoman Turkish (i.e., Asiatic) cultural traditions, possess it. We could call it, as I have above, "free-market pluralism," tracing it back to the Catholic and Protestant transformations of Europe. But perhaps the best description of this ineffable cultural element was provided 144 years ago by the Russian liberal Aleksandr Herzen, who wrote as follows about the Slavic East, and an earlier encounter with modernity, in his 1855 work, *From the Other Shore*: "The revolution of Peter the Great replaced the obsolete squirearchy of Russia — with a European bureaucracy; everything that could be copied from the Swedish and German laws, everything that could be taken over from the free municipalities of Holland into our half-communal, half-absolutist country, was taken over; but the unwritten, the moral check on power, the instinctive recognition of the rights of man, of the rights of thought, of truth, could not be and were not imported."

Yugoslavia collapsed for reasons Madison or Burke would have fully understood. And its downfall is a lesson more for public philosophers than for military experts or ethnologists. It is one Americans should never forget.

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The Golden Age Of Cooking

By Amanda Watson Schnetzer

Cookery is the art of preparing food for the nourishment of the body. Prehistoric man may have lived on uncooked foods, but there are no savage races today who do not practice cookery in some way, however crude. Progress in civilization has been accompanied by progress in cookery.
— Fannie Merritt Farmer, author of
The Boston Cooking School Cook Book, 1896

AMERICANS TODAY, from garden-variety couch potatoes to sophisticated trend setters, have never been more obsessed with food, glorious food. At no other time has America enjoyed as many restaurants, touted as many celebrity chefs, published as many cookbooks and magazines devoted to good food and libations, produced as many cooking programs for television, or had such unlimited access to abundant and cheap food products from the world over. We are sowing, marketing, buying, selling, preparing, and, of course, eating food at unprecedented rates.

The beau monde brand of cooking that is gracing restaurant menus across the country is called "new American cuisine." Its roots reach back to the earliest days of colonial settlement. It has come of age only recently, starting in the finest restaurants in our biggest cities, then spreading out geographically and socially to take root not just in restaurant kitchens but also in home kitchens around the country.

Like our forefathers' and mothers' cookery, new American cuisine is driven by seasonal ingredients purchased from local growers and small distrib-

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utors. Its purveyors profess a commitment to presenting nature in its purest finery — peppery greens freshly pulled from the soil, fragrant fruits just plucked from the tree, and succulent fish netted in nearby sea or stream. The recipes they create are culled from a vast reservoir of regional and immigrant traditions made possible by the rich American experience. Each dish is meant to please the eye and delight the palate; each also connects us to the past. New American cuisine is our most mature blending of "indigenous ingredients, regional preferences, ethnic influences, and historical currents and traditions" to date, as David Belman wrote in the trade publication *Restaurants USA*.

With the ripening of new American cuisine has come a stunning profusion of restaurants and cookbooks devoted to the exquisite, authentic rendition of cooking from around the world. We do not just have Chinese food. We have Hunan, Szechuan, Cantonese, and more, and before we leave Asia, we can add Japanese, Korean, Thai, and Vietnamese cuisine, and Pan-Asian noodle houses offering up Indonesian and Malaysian variations. Where "Italian" once meant tomato sauce, we now choose from specialists in the cooking of Piedmont, Tuscany, Liguria, or Sicily. "Pacific Rim" cooks and Mediterranean restaurants span continents to offer samples of the beguiling similarities and intriguing differences on the stovetops where a body of water meets the land.

With the ripening of new American cuisine has come a stunning profusion of restaurants and books devoted to cooking from around the world.

Meanwhile, any local supermarket bursts today with exotica unheard of 20 or 30 years ago. Consider the produce department. The ubiquitous white button mushroom is now just the humblest offering in a mushroom *section*, which also typically includes portabella, cremini, and shiitake, for starters. Iceberg lettuce must make room for green leaf, red leaf, escarole, endive, radicchio, Boston, and more. Most of those lettuces are now also available prewashed, impeccably fresh, and absurdly convenient, packaged in high-tech plastic bags. Through hybridization, we have discovered entirely new fruits and vegetables: Grocers have recently introduced us to broccoflower, the plumcot, and broccolini.

There is no avoiding a simple conclusion: Whatever else may be true of our cultural condition, future gourmands, "foodies," and social historians alike will conclude that by the end of the twentieth century, the golden age of cooking and eating was upon us.

On the surface, the American food obsession may seem merely a passing fancy fueled by prosperity. We are bored. We have money. We need to be entertained. The amusement of ourselves with the Food Network, cheese

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making, and tasting tours in the California wine country is as acceptable an articulation of consumerism and an expenditure of our leisure time as any other. And by nature we prefer the innovative to the staid. As Margaret Visser, the author of *The Rituals of Dinner*, has written, our "love of the new" has become an integral part of "the modern middle-class image." Or, as the great French chef August Escoffier noted without pleasure in his 1909 *Guide to Modern Cookery*, "[N]ovelty is the universal cry — novelty by hook or by crook! It is an exceedingly common mania among people of inordinate wealth to exact incessantly new or so-called new dishes."

And yet. This obsession with edibles may have a bit more to it than that. Consider my own case. Affluence certainly contributes to my love of food. I am an educated young woman with a good job. Married, no children, at least not yet. My husband and I are, in advertising parlance, "dinks" (dual income, no kids). Despite graduate school loans that may never go away, I still have enough money and leisure time to revel in the sensuous delights of truffle oil drizzled over a creamy dish of polenta and to study how to prepare a lemon curd that is tart enough to make you pucker for a kiss but not so tart that you forget it is the curd and not the kiss you are after. Earlier this year, I even had the pleasure of spending three months working in one of Washington, D.C.'s most civilized restaurant kitchens.

In my mind's eye I see grandmother in the kitchen baking juicy rhubarb and raspberry cobblers.

What draws my senses to things culinary, though, is not just these miscellaneous pursuits. I am lured to food by the remembrances of hearth and home that simple jewels like sweet summer fruits, a buttery fried egg, a bouquet of herbs, and a bit of bread and wine can evoke. In my mind's eye I see grandmother in the kitchen baking juicy rhubarb and raspberry cobblers and jarring sweet "bread and butter" pickles. I can feel my grandfather's large hand gently pushing mine under a chicken in search of the day's freshest eggs. There is also the smell of sassafras, or filé as we call it in Louisiana, that takes me home on a Saturday afternoon. While a pot of shrimp creole steams on the stove, my father is mixing it up in the kitchen, dancing a waltz or two with my mother. The gentle bubbling of the pot keeps time. As for the bread and wine, they are the eternal foods that "preserve thy body and soul unto everlasting life." In my Christian upbringing, there is no better eating.

The "new American cuisine" and the other bounties of our golden age of cooking manage to capture these antithetical cravings for the fresh and the familiar and capitalize on our search for artistry, heritage, and liberation in the pleasures of the table. As Escoffier believed of French cuisine, it is "proof of our degree of civilization." In a world of "getting and spending," to borrow a phrase from Wordsworth's "The World Is Too Much With Us," our

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preoccupation with the most mundane and familiar of habits might signal a hungering for simple, approachable beauty, for lingering communion with others, and for a link to days gone by.

The wealthy table

THE UNITED STATES IS ENJOYING unprecedented levels of economic performance and prosperity. Americans today have more free time and spend larger proportions of their income on recreation than just a generation ago. We also spend smaller shares of our income on food. This illustrates, as economists Herbert Stein and Murray Foss note, "one of the best established laws of economics, namely, that as the income of families — or nations — increases, the proportion spent on food diminishes."

From 1983 to 1996, the number of jobs in the United States for skilled restaurant cooks alone rose from 408,000 to 727,000.

The fact that we are spending proportionally less of our wages on food, though, does not mean that American food producers are poor. In fact, our food and beverage industries have been prime beneficiaries of this rising prosperity. Their name recognition alone can be worth billions of dollars. Recently, for example, the international consultancy Interbrand placed eight American food and beverage producers — Coca-Cola, McDonald's, Heinz, Budweiser, Kellogg's, Pepsi-Cola, Wrigley's, and Burger King — on its list of the world's 60 most valuable brand names. Coca-Cola edged out Microsoft for the highest slot with a brand name value of $83 billion, compared to Microsoft's $56 billion. McDonald's placed eighth with a brand name value of $26 billion.

Patterns of growth in restaurant sales are similar to those for gross domestic product and disposable income. In current dollars, this amounted to an average annual rate of growth in sales of 7.9 percent between 1970 and 1995, or an increase from $42.8 billion to $295.7 billion. Industry analysts expect sales in 1999 to top $354 billion. In 1997, Americans spent almost 40 percent of their food bills on food prepared away from home. When broken down by income group (before taxes), the share spent on food away from home ranged from 36.7 percent for households with incomes of less than $5,000 to 47.8 percent for households with incomes of $70,000 or more, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

The total number of restaurants in the United States rose from 492,000 in 1972 to 815,000 in 1996. Industry association figures claim 10.2 million workers are on restaurant payrolls, making the industry the largest retail

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employer in the country. With a strong economy, though, comes competition. More full-service restaurants, for example, have been forced to offer higher wages, paid vacations, medical coverage, and even retirement plans to entice good employees to stay.

In other food-related industries, growth has been just as bold. Since its launch in 1993, the Food Network on cable television has gained access to an American audience of more than 37 million people. In a given week, it broadcasts more than 20 different programs ranging from New Orleans chef Emeril Lagasse's wildly successful "Essence of Emeril" to the marvelous Japanese production "Ryori no Tetsujin," or "Iron Chef," which pits a master chef against a challenger in an hour-long duel of creativity and skill. There are at least 153 American periodicals and newsletters devoted to food and wine, 700 schools offering culinary courses, and a growing number of quality food sites on the Internet.

This explosive growth is even generating new occupations. "Chef publicists" now charge thousands of dollars to promote the careers of star chefs. *Entrepreneur* magazine just named the personal chef industry one of the nation's 12 hottest businesses. And in case you have ever wondered what industry folk are calling those complete ready-to-eat meals you are buying, it is "home meal replacement." Their goal seems quite clear.

Kitchen work in America's restaurants is not for milksops. The hours are long. The pay is low. And the toil itself is taxing on the body.

For the genuine American "foodie," the most exciting development in recent decades has been the increase in the number of skilled American cooks. In 1933, in a letter to Escoffier, Mr. Oscar of the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel in New York rejoiced at having found a new French cook for his restaurant. "It saved us much trouble," he wrote, "because here in America chefs are very rare; I don't know where to find them." Today we all can rejoice that the situation is much different. Americans of all ages are flocking to the profession.

In the 1990s alone, enrollment in American culinary academies has skyrocketed. At the well-known New York Restaurant School, for example, enrollment leaped from 400 full-time students in 1992 to 1,000 in 1996. When the Culinary Institute of America, the country's premier school in Hyde Park, N.Y. opened its Greystone campus in California in 1995, enrollment immediately reached its maximum of 2,000. From 1983 to 1996, the number of jobs in the United States for skilled restaurant cooks alone rose from 408,000 to 727,000. The Bureau of Labor Statistics expects this number to increase 14.6 percent by 2006.

But kitchen work in America's restaurants is not for milksops. The hours are long. The pay is low. And the toil itself is taxing on the body. Except for

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the hottest celebrity chefs whose annual earnings can run into the millions ($2.4 million for Emeril Lagasse and an estimated $10.5 million for Wolfgang Puck in 1998, according to a *New York Times* article by food writer Bryan Miller), the reward has to be more personal than financial. The National Restaurant Association reports, for example, that the salary for most executive chefs is around $40,000. For sous chefs it is $27,500. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the mean hourly wage for full-time cooks in the United States was only $8.55 in 1997. For part-time workers, who made up 40 percent of all cooks, average earnings were only $7.13 per hour. It is hard to justify the lifestyle for this kind of money, so something else must be drawing them in.

Of the more than three hundred students enrolled in Manhattan's prestigious French Culinary Institute in 1996, approximately 85 percent were career changers. At the New York Restaurant School the percentage was around 60. To be sure, changes in the American economy have forced some students into their new careers. But many others are choosing the profession because cooking calls up a passion that their desk jobs do not. They revel in perfecting a dish that renders ephemeral beauty and lasting remembrances. And some of them are finding inspiration in the earliest days of our nation's history.

New World bounty

When English colonists stepped onto our Eastern shores in the seventeenth century, they naturally brought with them traditional cooking methods and whatever ingredients had survived the long ocean voyage. But from New England to Virginia, colonists immediately delighted in the New World's great bounty. Wealthy and poor alike soon substituted native ingredients for English ones and adapted them to traditional recipes. Colonists even adopted farming and cooking techniques they learned from Native Americans. As one historian commented in 1705 on the use of cornmeal, or "Indian meal":

> The bread in gentlemen's houses is generally made of wheat, but some rather choose the pone, which is the bread made of *Indian* meal. Many of the poorer sort of people so little regard the English grain, that though they might have it with the least trouble in the world, yet they don't mind to sow the ground, because they won't be at the trouble of making a fence particularly for it. And therefore their constant bread is pone, not so called from the Latin, *Panis*, but from the *Indian* name *oppone*.

From the beginning of colonial settlement, there was something special about the American diet. The abundant victuals served with great hospitality, while surely not a cause célèbre, did not go unnoticed. In July 1746, the

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London Magazine printed the following observations on Virginia's obliging accommodation and plenteous table:

> All over the Colony, an universal hospitality reigns; full tables and open doors, the kind salute, the generous detention, speak somewhat like the old roast-beef ages of our fore-fathers, and would almost persuade one to think their shades were wasted into these regions, to enjoy with greater extent, the reward of their virtues. (What is said here is most strictly true, for their manner of living is quite generous and open: strangers are sought after with greediness, as they pass the country, to be invited. Their breakfast tables have generally the cold remains of the former day, hash'd or fricasseed; coffee, tea, chocolate, venison-pasty, punch, and beer, or cyder, upon one board; their dinner, good beef, veal, mutton, venison, turkies and Geese, wild and tame, fowls, boil'd and roasted; and perhaps somewhat more, as pies, puddings, &c., for dessert: Suppers the same, with some small addition, and a good hearty cup to precede a bed of down: And this is the constant life they lead, and to this fare every comer is welcome.)

In 1796 Amelia Simmons completed American Cookery, *the first truly American cookbook.*

In 1796 Amelia Simmons completed *American Cookery*, the first truly American cookbook. "Colonial cookery had undergone numerous changes since [our] ancestors had first established homes in the New World, and British authors seemed unaware of the resulting Americans' needs in cooking instructions," writes Mary Tolford Wilson, author of the introduction to *American Cookery*'s 1958 edition. Simmons was the first to publish many of the New World variations. In addition to the substitution of cornmeal for flour in bread and cake recipes, there was the use of pumpkins and crookneck squash in pies, the accompaniment of turkey with cranberry sauce, and the replacement of yeast with pearlash (a forerunner of baking power) as a leaven in doughs. *American Cookery*'s second edition contained recipes for patriotic concoctions such as Election Cake, Independence Cake, and Federal Pan Cake. According to Wilson, these recipes "record[ed] by their names America's awareness of its new status as a nation."

Even our founding fathers recognized something special in the new American diet, and writer Evan Jones has preserved one of the finest examples of this in his book *American Food: The Gastronomic Story*. Benjamin Franklin, he writes, so craved the tastes of America during a long visit to England in 1765 that he had a few of his favorite things shipped from home. Franklin, who was representing the colonies in London, pleaded with his

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wife to send a parcel with fruits, buckwheat flour, and cornmeal. He planned to teach his English cook how to prepare some of his favorite American dishes, and he needed the proper ingredients to do so. These items, he wrote, "will be of great refreshment to me this winter; for since I cannot be in America, everything that comes from thence comforts me a little, as being like home."

With migration and Spartan living conditions in colonial settlements came distinctive regional traditions. The religious beliefs of New England Puritans, for example, required the preparation of simple recipes made with the freshest of God's bounty. Their unadorned Christmas menu of roast turkey, cranberry tarts, pumpkin pies, beans, and potatoes became the unofficial fare for our Thanksgiving celebration, which President Lincoln declared a national holiday in 1863. "The simplicity of the menu," wrote Williams Woys Weaver in an article on Thanksgiving, 1887, in the *Journal of Gastronomy*, "came to symbolize lean, spare American values."

Roots everywhere

THROUGHOUT THE COLONIES, newcomers coupled their native traditions with what Alexis de Tocqueville called the "confusion of objects and the prodigious varieties of scenes" that is the American landscape. Dutch and German settlers in Pennsylvania gave us recipes for their slaw, bologna sausage, apple butter, chicken pot pie, and dumplings. Slaves from the Caribbean and West Africa stashed the roots and seeds of their native foods into whatever possessions they could carry. They introduced such delights as okra, peas, and sweet potatoes to the rice plantations of the Carolinas. New Orleans Creole gumbo and jambalaya might never have been without their predecessors, French bouillabaisse and Spanish paella. In the Southwest, Mexicans spiced the pot with chilies of all kinds.

Today, the American tradition of welcoming and adapting ethnic cuisine is alive and well. A recent survey of 2,000 households commissioned by the National Restaurant Association showed that more than 50 percent had tried Chinese, Italian, Mexican, Tex-Mex, German, Greek, Cajun/Creole, and Japanese foods. When asked about awareness of a cuisine, the list grew. More than 50 percent of the households surveyed were also aware of French, Soul, Scandinavian, Indian, Caribbean, Korean, Thai, Vietnamese, and Middle Eastern foods.

Despite American resourcefulness, our cooking has always lurked in the shadow of the world's finest culinary art form. Ever since Thomas Jefferson hired the first French chef for the White House, "Continental" has been synonymous with sophisticated. "American" has stood for plain and provincial. Jefferson was actually an avid gardener who stocked his plots with the latest New World treasures, but he also loved French food. "[M]any of the nation's elite," writes Richard Pillsbury in *No Foreign Food*, "did not accept

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these rude American foods and ways of dining at all but continued consuming a largely European diet well into the twentieth century."

To this day, French chefs, techniques, foods, wines, and restaurants carry a mark of distinction that buttered grits prepared by a short-order cook at the local diner will never receive. While the French still make perfect bâtards of bread, melt-away pâté, and splendiferous Camembert cheeses, we make Wonder Bread, bean dip, and Cheese Wiz. Thus, the American culinary reputation for function over form is somewhat well-deserved. As the English captain Frederick Marryat wrote in *Diary in America* in the early nineteenth century, "God sends meat, and the devil sends cooks, such is and unfortunately must be the case for a long while, in most of the houses of America."

Escoffier recognized the superiority of French cuisine not only in its status as a "science," but in its triumph as an art. "[T]his art is first and foremost our national art *par excellence*," he wrote in his memoir. The French have spent centuries refining their cooking techniques and traditions, and they are simply irreproachable. This explains why for many American gourmands the artistry of the techniques has driven them to adore French cuisine and to abhor our native fare. A terrine of pheasant layered with bacon and truffles may evoke images of the earth's rich geological layers, but a lime-flavored gelatin salad with marshmallows and canned fruit cocktail will only provoke one's hauteur.

A farmer's tale

WHILE FOR CENTURIES American cooking may have lacked the artistry of French cuisine, it has honored the toil, faith, and tenacity that the earliest settlers and slaves alike brought to this country's tables. In our capacity to adapt and to endure there was ultimate freedom. As Jean Anthelme Brillat-Savarin — the beloved French judge-turned-gastronome — was bold enough to declare, "[T]he destiny of nations depends on how they nourish themselves."

Brillat-Savarin illustrated the connection between American food and freedom in a charming tale. After the French Revolution of 1789, he spent two years in exile in the United States. Here he discovered both delicacies in the American diet and sophistication in American government. Brillat-Savarin delighted in America's abundance of wild turkeys — "delicious and much better than the ones we raise in Europe" — and even "had the good luck to kill [one]." He also found a conversation with a Mr. Bulow, a farmer living outside Hartford, Conn. so "profoundly interesting" that he preserved the memory in *The Physiology of Taste*. Mr. Bulow, "having drawn me to one side," shared the following insight:

> You see in me, my dear sir, a happy man, if such there be on earth: everything around you and all that you have so far observed is a product

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of what I own. These stockings I wear were knitted by my daughters; my shoes and my clothes come from my own sheep; they help also, with my gardens and barnyards, to furnish me with simple nourishing food; and what makes our government so admirable is that here in Connecticut there are thousands of farmers just as happy as I am, and whose doors, like mine, are never bolted.

Taxes here are almost nothing; and as long as they are paid we can sleep in peace. Congress does everything in its power to help our newborn industry; agents come from every direction to buy up whatever we have to sell; and I have cash on hand for a long time, for I have just sold for twenty-four dollars a barrel the wheat I usually get eight for.

All this is the result of the liberty which we have fought for and founded on good laws. I am master in my own house, and you will not be astonished to know that we never hear the sound of the drum here, nor, except for the fourth of July, the glorious anniversary of our independence, do we ever see soldiers, or uniforms, or bayonets.

The kitchen comes of age

With American prosperity in the twentieth century, our most basic culinary traditions have been raised to a new level of distinction. This has been especially true in the years since World War II, and two individuals stand head and shoulders above the rest in promoting a "new American cuisine" worthy of respect. They are James Beard and Julia Child. According to the editors of *Saveur Cooks Authentic American*, a 1999 James Beard Foundation Book Award winner, Mr. Beard "preached flavorful food prepared with local, seasonal ingredients to a postwar America, reveling in the scientific 'advances' of frozen and pre-made foods." Julia Child taught a public television audience to do so with style and panache.

After a failed attempt at acting, James Beard surrendered to his other great love, food. In his first book, published in 1940, American progress and modern food were his themes. "It is a far cry from the fly-specked and hearty free-lunch table of the American pioneer saloon to the perfectly appointed hors d'oeuvre table of today," he wrote, "but I think America has jumped the gap and is safely on the modern side." More than 30 years later, Beard remained wide-eyed about American cooking, despite what he saw as its "grotesqueries," i.e., convenience foods. He recognized the unique qualities of regional foods and acknowledged a debt to the French for their techniques and to other immigrants for their inspiration. "I believe we have a rich and fascinating food heritage that occasionally reaches greatness in its own melting pot way," he wrote in his 1972 book *American Cookery*. "We are barely beginning to sift down into a cuisine of our own."

By teaching authentic French cooking techniques to American home

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cooks, Julia Child secured a permanent place for them, and for herself, in America's culinary heritage. Her devotion to the artistry of cooking was a perfect complement to James Beard. "What drove me into French cuisine was the seriousness of the art," she said in a 1996 interview. A former wannabe spy and a manager with the U.S. Office of Strategic Services (now the CIA), Child enrolled in Paris's famed Cordon Bleu cooking school in 1949. She co-authored *Mastering the Art of French Cooking* in 1961 and brought culinary artistry to American television in 1963 with "The French Chef." Since then she has written nine more books, hosted three more television series (with another on the way), received the first prime-time Emmy nomination for a cooking show, and co-founded the American Institute of Wine and Food. At the age of 87 she continues to share her devotion to the art of cuisine with American cooks.

Not long before his death in 1985, James Beard heralded the coming of age of American cuisine. "[M]ore and more people are forced to agree that we have developed one of the more interesting cuisines of the world. It stresses the products of the soil, native traditions, and the gradual integration of many ethnic forms into what is now American cooking." A better definition of "new American cuisine" does not exist, and in it American chefs are finding inspiration.

Artistry and heritage

LARRY FORGIONE IS FREQUENTLY referred to as the "Godfather" of new American cuisine. At his New York restaurant, An American Place, he transforms simple cookery into refined cuisine. A Hudson Valley duck becomes a wood-grilled steak with crushed black peppercorns and lavender served with caramelized parsnip puree and sweet potato straws. A standard Pennsylvania Dutch turkey pot pie becomes a delicate herb biscuit with stewed chestnuts, root vegetables, forest mushrooms, and, of course, turkey. If they were prepared without forethought to artistry and heritage, Chef Forgione's new American creations would become mere hodge-podges of culinary busyness with a faint resemblance to something you ate somewhere, sometime, you could not be sure. Instead, even New York's snobbish and cosmopolitian food hounds, long accustomed to the best French cooking in the New World, seek out his American creations with their typical conspicuous abandon.

Of the traditional dinner party, Robert Capon, author of the estimable *Supper of the Lamb*, has written, "It is precisely because no one needs soup, fish, meat, salad, cheese, and dessert at one meal that we so badly need to sit down to them from time to time. It was *largesse* that made us all; we were not created to fast forever. . . . Enter here, therefore, as a sovereign remedy for the narrowness of our minds and the stinginess of our souls." Alice Waters is trying to remedy what ails us at her beloved restaurant Chez

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Panisse in Berkeley. She serves cuisine so fresh and so exquisite that diners don't mind the pricey prix fixe tab. But mindful of the tension between our want of the novel and our need for the familiar, Chez Panisse offers only one set menu, and it changes nightly — just like home. The combination, on the evidence of a crowded reservations book, is glorious.

In a seductive world of "home meal replacements," the same chefs who tempt us through their restaurant doors are preserving the legacy of American cuisine in a host of other, more affordable ways. Their cookbooks, for example, bring American cuisine full circle: traditional regional and immigrant cookery elevated to haute cuisine and then translated back into dishes that can be prepared with relative ease in the home and need not come from a box or bag.

You can't get much more American than the Florida fish house grouper, the frontier chicken-fried steak, and the West Virginia sweet and sour short ribs.

Bobby Flay of New York's Mesa Grill, for example, has written a wonderful cookbook called *Bold American Food*. It contains dazzling Southwestern dishes from his restaurant that have been "reworked . . . to make sense in your kitchen." He takes classic pork tenderloin and "punches it up" with chipotle peppers and a spicy apple chutney. A pan fried snapper gets an added zip with a blue cornmeal coating instead of the usual yellow.

Likewise, in his 1991 cookbook *Seasoned America*, New Orleans chef Paul Prudhomme set out to help readers "understand how delicious traditional American food can be. . . . My goal," he continues, "is that you have fun in the kitchen, while turning out heavenly dishes that bear your own signature." You can't get much more American than the Florida fish house grouper, the frontier chicken-fried steak, and the West Virginia sweet and sour short ribs in this book.

In order to appreciate new American cuisine fully, though, you must ignore its pretentious moniker. Americans today are too quick to think that to be respected something must look or sound progressive. "New American" may be adjectives more aptly suited for the prepared, frozen, and take-out foods that encourage us to eat on the run. One in five American consumers, for example, is buying his meals fully prepared at the grocery store. Sixty percent of Burger King customers report eating their meals in the car, according to a survey reported in *Advertising Age*.

On the other side, though, a 1996 restaurant industry survey showed that of 21 meals per week, Americans still were preparing 14 at home. This is only slightly less than the number reported 15 years ago. The overall trend, however, is moving toward more commercially prepared meals. For the sake

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of our progeny, who could languish in blissful ignorance of the lost pleasures of learning to cook at home with their families, we should not let this trend get too far out of hand.

If you can avoid treating new American cuisine "as if it were some kind of patriotic endeavor one simply *must* pursue," in the words of James Beard, you will discover that it is a festal endeavor that one can enjoy in relative simplicity at home or in lavish splendor at a favorite restaurant. Either way, it celebrates our prosperity and honors the industrious melting pot and hospitable table that has characterized American society since the first colonial settlers arrived on these shores. It raises up what Leon Kass, the distinguished author of *The Hungry Soul*, has called the "deep connections among human eating, human freedom, and human moral self-consciousness" and casts them in a light that is uniquely and venerably American. It is a thread that binds together our seemingly disparate and "multicultural" lives and makes this age of American cuisine truly golden.

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Allen Drury and the Washington Novel

By ROGER KAPLAN

WHEN ALLEN DRURY DIED LAST YEAR on his 80th birthday, the thoughts of editors and obituary writers naturally turned to *Advise and Consent*, the book that made him famous, that gave a memorable last film role to Charles Laughton, and that in many ways invented a genre in fiction. Henry Adams and John Dos Passos had written novels on politics in Washington. But the use of a racy intrigue, if possible involving both sex and foreign policy, is what characterizes the contemporary form. Forty years on, *Advise and Consent* is the only book of this genre that a literary-minded person really *ought* to read. Indeed, as *Saturday Review* noted in August 1959, "It may be a long time before a better one comes along." Forty years so far.

The plot of *Advise and Consent* revolves around a showdown between the president of the United States and the senior senator from South Carolina, the memorable Seabright Cooley. They belong to opposing wings of the same party and disagree on most things, and specifically, in this case, the president's nomination of one Robert A. Leffingwell — slick, popular with the media, devious, liberal (he was played by Henry Fonda) — to be secretary of state. The president of the United States has the right — everyone in this book agrees — to his policies. But the Senate has the duty to protect the higher interests of the nation, in this case its basic security, since the nominee may be a communist and is certainly a liar. The first question is how the senators should use their prerogatives and their oversight responsibilities to block Leffingwell's nomination or so circumscribe him that he will be ineffectual if confirmed in the position. The next question is to what ruthlessly manipulative lengths the president and his allies are willing to go to get their man in. The final question is how much the men of character in the novel will grow from the awful dramas resulting from the confirmation fight

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— notably the rather bumbling vice-president, who will soon find himself, when the president dies, with the ultimate responsibility of facing down the Soviet Union.

Loosely inspired by the Hiss case, the plot of *Advise and Consent* unfolds against the double background of nasty domestic politics and an ominous international situation. The story, set contemporaneously, was written in 1958 — Drury said he had started it several years before and returned to it — and published in 1959. The date is noteworthy, because it evokes a time when Washington really was a simpler place than it is today ("a sleepy southern town," the saying went). Also, the great political forces set in motion by the New Deal, regarding the power of the federal government in relation to the states, and the power of the executive in relation to the other branches, had not entirely resolved themselves. The immense power of the presidency was a fact, but it was not quite a custom yet. The Senate still had prestige, and Drury loved — and taught millions of readers to love — its grand traditions of oratory and parliamentary politics. These protected the states and the republic against the excesses of the executive's grasp for power. Drury understood perhaps as well as anyone in his time that executive power was corrupting, in the manner Lord Acton said it was.

Drury understood perhaps as well as anyone that executive power was corrupting, in the manner Lord Acton said it was.

Transcending the immediate issue — whether the president should jeopardize national security by placing an appeaser, and possibly an agent, of the Soviet Union at the helm of American diplomacy when the Soviets (this too dates the story in the late 1950s) seemed to be pulling ahead of the U.S. in the arms race with the successful testing of a moon rocket — the question was whether the president should be able to run foreign policy without waiting for, as the Constitution has it, the Senate to advise and consent. This is a question, as the next decades would amply confirm, that transcended ideological or partisan differences, as every president, conservative or liberal, found himself in bitter disputes with the Senate over foreign policy questions.

Drury, a man formed in Texas and California (Stanford University, about which he wrote three novels), loved Washington.

> Like a city in dreams, the great white capital stretches along the placid river from Georgetown on the west to Anacostia on the east. It is a city of temporaries, a city of just-arriveds and only-visitings, built on the shifting sands of politics, filled with people passing through. They may stay 50 years [as Drury did], they may love, marry, settle down, build homes, raise families, and die beside the Potomac, but they usually

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> feel, and frequently they will tell you, that they are just here for a little while. Someday soon they will be going home. They do go home, but only for visits, or for a brief span of staying-away; and once the visits or the brief spans are over ("It's so nice to get away from Washington, it's so inbred; so nice to get out in the country and find out what people are really thinking") they hurry back to their lodestones and their star, their self-hypnotized, self-mesmerized, self-enamored, self-propelling, wonderful city they cannot live away from or, once it has claimed them, live without. . . . They come, they stay, they make their mark, writing big or little on their times, in the strange, fantastic, fascinating city that mirrors so faithfully their strange, fantastic, fascinating land in which there are few absolute wrongs or absolute rights, few all-blacks or all-whites, few dead-certain positives that won't be changed tomorrow; their wonderful, mixed-up, blundering, stumbling, hopeful land in which evil men do good things and good men do evil in a way of life and government so complex and delicately balanced that only Americans can understand it, and often they are baffled.

This was Allen Drury's Washington. For three or four years, Drury was the necessary reference to anyone needing a picture of what mattered in American politics, and for at least a generation beyond that, *Advise and Consent* remained the only novel that easily came to mind when one needed a fictional authority to describe what Washington *was*.

Drury's prose has all the grandiloquence and turgidity of the repressed wire service man, *New York Times* reporter, and *Reader's Digest*er that he was. But it is distinctly and honorably his. He wanted to paint a broad canvas, just as Balzac (another sometimes awful prose writer) did for Paris. His prose had character, integrity — style. It succeeded in evoking a place and a phenomenon, in a way American novels are called upon to do. To find out about the army, you read James Jones and Irwin Shaw; the navy, Herman Wouk; the "Jewish Experience," Saul Bellow; the "Negro Experience," Ralph Ellison. Of course this is to mix together writers of vastly different ambitions and achievements, but it is to say that there is a claim — and who is to say it is not a legitimate claim? — on novelists that they devote at least part of their careers to adding to the great unfinished fresco of American life. Drury did it for Washington.

Drury never wrote a *roman à clef*. Even with his transparent attack on the *Washington Post*, *Anna Hastings* (1977), he wanted his characters to be originals. Critics of *Advise and Consent* assumed that his Senate Majority Leader Robert Munson, for example, was a stand-in for Robert Taft, whom Drury admired. But Drury didn't just graft a fictional name on a journalistic portrait. His "Taft" is, to pick an essential quality of the original, anything but an isolationist. The "McCarthyite" character in *Advise and Consent* is a flaming pro-communist liberal. This may or may not have been an anticipation of the direction American liberalism would take. But it certainly was

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Drury's way of saying that the liberals were as prone to the demagogy associated with "McCarthyism" as were the conservatives, perhaps more so. It is remarkable how prescient Drury was about the evolution of American political tendencies in the 1960s and '70s.

But unlike many journalists, senators, ex-policy makers, and others who have tried their hands at fiction and covered themselves with embarrassment, Drury was not only trying to say something about the issues of the day. He was trying to say something about character and about the way it will express itself — or how it will be tested — in American democracy. In other words, it was character — a novelist's subject matter — that he was really interested in. That is why *Advise and Consent* works as well today as it did in 1959. In *Advise and Consent* and the first sequel he wrote, *A Shade of Difference*, Drury was able to depict not what political animals are like in Washington, but what politics does to the human animal.

The issue Sen. Cooley seizes to kill the presidential nomination in *Advise and Consent* is honesty. The nominee lied about something in his past. It was very minor, probably did not extend into his later career. But before Cooley's victory there has been considerable (and tragic) drama, a life has been destroyed, the honest men have been separated from the scoundrels.

THE TWO MAJOR HUMAN DRAMAS in *A Shade of Difference* (1962) concern the competing claims on an individual's loyalties that men, and politicians in particular, accumulate as they make their way in life. Drury understood that good, or better, men are formed on the anvil of moral ambiguity — rather than in the certitudes (selfish or ideological) of demagogy. Cullee Hamilton, a brilliant and charismatic black congressman from California, must represent his district, which is reasonably liberal; he must represent "the race," since this is 1962 and the final push for civil rights in the U.S. is under way but still an unsure thing (the Voting Rights Act did not pass until 1965); he is a patriot who believes his country has done well, by any comparative measure, in dealing with racial issues. Above all, at a time when racial polarization was rapidly gaining momentum and black liberals were becoming easy targets — easier even than white liberals — for radical race men, he has the courage to believe that America's democratic political system offers the best chance of peaceful and legal progress. He loves his mother, a South Carolina charwoman who after the death of her husband made sure her children worked very hard, stayed very honest, and did very well. He loves his wife and feels a loyalty to his best friend in college, who has veered off toward the politics of confrontation.

South Carolina's senior senator, introduced in *Advise and Consent*, too has competing pressures on him. He is loyal to the United States and the U.S. Senate in which he has served many decades, but he is loyal as well to his constituents, who are segregationist whites with whom he agrees and identifies. His personal life is simpler than Hamilton's: Disappointed in love,

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he has remained a life-long bachelor. This may, in reality, make him a more complicated man than Hamilton, but at least the outward pressures, such as having a promiscuous and spoiled wife taunt him for uncle-tomism (or whatever the equivalent would be in his case), are not there.

It was when character took second place to contemporary events, as it increasingly did in Drury's writings, that the writing seemed more like fictionalized commentary than real fiction. Actually, Drury after *Advise and Consent* pioneered a genre that might be called the novelization of Washington politics. Henry Adams had done something like this in his novel *Democracy*, a satire on political life in Washington in the 1880s.

One of the reasons for the huge success of *Advise and Consent* — it beat all records for duration (98 weeks) on the best-seller lists, won a Pulitzer Prize, and was well received critically — was surely its journalistic skill and political acuity. It not only captured a nervous moment in American political life, but settled a number of scores that had been festering since the New Deal, and particularly since the Truman administration. In 1959 many Americans were still passionately divided over Roosevelt, some judging him to have been the messiah and others a cynical and manipulative liberticide. Truman was still loathed by Republicans in general and conservatives in particular, not just Southern conservatives, as the evil genius of liberalism. Liberal Democrats, though they had to defend Truman against the right, were well aware that he had invented a national security policy, both at home and abroad, with which many of them (by no means all) were uncomfortable. Republicans in the 1950s did not view Truman as a principled anti-communist. And tough and principled and sensible as he was, Truman himself was not always as clear-sighted as advertised a generation later by some of his neoconservative followers, who used him as the reference for the transference of their allegiances to another party. In the 1956 election, for instance, Truman was still all but defending Alger Hiss, who by then had been convicted and sent to jail. Many if not most liberal Democrats were still more Stevensonian than Kennedyesque, and Kennedy was the real follower of Truman, tough on communism and a hardball player in domestic politics.

Drury after Advise and Consent *pioneered a genre that might be called the novelization of Washington politics.*

Likewise, in *A Shade of Difference* and *Capable of Honor* (1966) and the later books, Drury used a series of dramas to organize his view on the issues of the day. He was good at this. A Southerner and a conservative, he was clear-eyed and ahead of everyone, notably almost all Southerners and most conservatives, in sensing how the country's political conventions were moving. Drury's treatment of the racial issue had nothing of the depth of

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Faulkner or Ellison, that is true; but he understood the issue, in political terms, in policy terms, and even — though he did not have the art to render it as they did — in psychological terms. In 1962, when America was still in practice and even, to some degree, in law, a segregated society, this was no small measure of his importance as a writer. (It is also, no doubt, part of the reason *A Shade of Difference* did not know the success of *Advise and Consent*; for some, it cut a little too close to the bone.)

The same acuity informed *Capable of Honor*, in which a newly independent African nation, whose leader was introduced as part of the racial schema of the previous novel, is now under attack from communist-supported insurgents. The analogy to South Vietnam was clear. Yet for readers in the 1960s, it was not general knowledge that in taking up the defense of South Vietnam, three administrations were not only involving themselves in a foreign adventure necessitated by the doctrine of containment of the Soviet Union, but also provoking a contest over the meaning of the United States itself which far outlasted the Vietnam war. Drury understood this earlier and better than most.

Drury understood the likely consequence of the larger demagogy.

Now, of course, the depth of Drury's insight should not be exaggerated. The race problem had been around for a long time, and there had been passionate arguments about American purposes and American foreign policy throughout the 1950s, not to mention following World War I and, for that matter, during the administration of Thomas Jefferson. However, the 1960s were different in that the contradiction between America's domestic situation and the purpose it had defined for itself in the world became untenable. Drury understood this very well. In making Cullee Hamilton the hero of *A Shade of Difference* and setting him in a pure Druryesque drama, namely a man attractive both personally and politically who is set upon by hyenas both at home and in public, Drury expressed his own liberalism on the racial question even as he foresaw that this position would soon be overwhelmed by racial demagogy. And he also showed how well he grasped that this demagogy would be used by America's enemies both at home and abroad, at precisely the moment when the American political system was showing a capacity for evolution toward racial harmony inconceivable anywhere else in the world.

He understood, too, the likely consequence, or at least one highly possible series of consequences, of the larger demagogy caused by the endless grasp for power. In *Advise and Consent*, the good guys win, notwithstanding the tragic price some of them have to pay. In *A Shade of Difference* and *Capable of Honor*, the good guys win, but with some ambiguity, and the reader is left with the idea that the other side will always be able to come back for more, whereas the patriotic American side, which holds that the nation can reverse its injustices at home and stand abroad as a bulwark of civilization against

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international communism, seems to be growing weaker. In fact, though he later left the racial question aside, in foreign affairs Drury became increasingly pessimistic. There were reasons for hope in the 1980s, but toward the end, with *A Thing of State* (1995), he was diagnosing American leadership as sooner or later incapable of resisting the likes of Saddam Hussein.

The profound pessimism is surely debatable on the merits. It also seems to have overwhelmed and clouded his political acuity. But that's not the real problem with the books. What's wrong with everything Drury wrote after *Advise and Consent* and *A Shade of Difference* is his excessive reliance on contemporary events to shape his fiction. He had a grand vision of his beloved nation, shaped by a grand question, which he placed at the end of his first novel: whether "history still had a place for a nation so strangely composed of great ideas and uneasy compromises." He believed it had, of course. He believed it had because the great ponderous system of checks and balances and compromises so lovingly depicted in *Advise and Consent* would assure the success of this improbable balance between ideals and practical problem-solving politics. But rather than continue to show, through the writer's art, how men's characters were formed in such a system and thus ensured its continuation, he gave in to the journalist's art of describing the events that were testing his contemporaries.

What's wrong is his excessive reliance on contemporary events to shape his fiction.

Though he never lost his talent for spinning a good yarn, drawing amusing, likeable, admirable, and detestable characters in great quantity, he lost his interest in transcending the political moment. It is impossible to read *A Thing of State* without finding deliberate references to the conduct of foreign policy under Presidents Carter and Clinton. His demolition of the *Washington Post* and the vices he considered to have seeped into the craft of political journalism in America, *Anna Hastings*, is incomprehensible to anyone not familiar with the evolution of the American media, and particularly the Washington media, in the past generation.

And this, of course, is the difference between art and melodrama. In drama *something happens* against which men's real characters are tested; in melodrama they are the way they are because of the way they are. Melodrama in other words serves up types; drama serves up real people.

This explains not only why Drury's first novels are the only ones that can be read for the aesthetic pleasure and moral insights literary art brings, but also why a "Washington novel" worthy of the name is such a rare thing. Washington attracts highly educated people who by almost any sociological definition are "intellectuals" — they deal in the circulation of ideas. But Washington (the place: but also the culture of political debate as it is practiced in America) does not produce an intellectual culture in the sense this would be, or would have been, understood in a traditional cosmopolitan

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capital (such as New York). Washington types are not interested in invented drama; they live with real drama every day in their battles over how to make and report and interpret and react to real events and policies. Policies and politics take on dramatic lives of their own, but for that very reason the human dramas behind them are forgotten. Even the mad soap opera of presidential impeachment the capital recently lived through probably will never be used as the basis for a work of fiction; R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr.'s advance fictional rendering of a Clinton impeachment drama was characteristic of writing about Washington in that it was a fictionalized version of contemporary events rather than fiction.

Is THE ENDLESS EXCITEMENT of Washington the reason there are so few memorable Washington novels? Is it why every young writer who comes to Washington with at least the potential for a novel in him instead devotes a lifetime to writing policy memos and journalism? This does not seem reasonable; many other cities are endlessly exciting. The reason, rather, is to be found in the nature of American politics. American politics is not about extreme situations. American politics, as Drury's (good) senators are at great pains to insist, is about compromise and restraint. This is why American literature has produced very few notable political novels, comparable to masterpieces like Dostoevski's *The Possessed* or Koestler's *Darkness at Noon*. American political novels of that level are on the short list of all-time cross-category masterpieces, for example Ellison's *Invisible Man*. Great political novels on the level just below this — Robert Penn Warren's *All The King's Men*, for example — are not set in Washington. In *Invisible Man*, it is well worth remembering, as in *Darkness at Noon*, an extreme situation, namely the issue of communism and specifically of the need for communism to dehumanize its opponents (and for that matter its followers), is crucial. Both these books are about politics. But they are great books precisely because, notwithstanding the communist issue which is essential to their plot lines and subject matter, they really transcend the issue of communism; indeed, they transcend politics. The great Washington novel must transcend the endless fascination of Washington.

This is what makes *Advise and Consent* such a remarkable achievement. Quite a few authors, in the 1970s and '80s, took up some of the themes that occupied Allen Drury, such as the threat of communist aggression and the changing role of the media in American culture. They tried to use their own insights or experiences in the world where media and national politics intersect — Washington — to offer a fictional shortcut to what they had learned. What they did was sometimes interesting and intelligent, and some of it might have been readable then, but it is no longer readable. What Drury did badly, they did worse, but they never did what he did well.

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BOOKS

The Systemization of Everything

By WOODY WEST

JOHN KEEGAN. *The First World War.* ALFRED A. KNOPF. 475 PAGES. $35.00

BYRON FARWELL. *Over There: The United States in the Great War, 1917-18.* W.W. NORTON. 336 PAGES. $27.95

THE PROMINENCE OF WAR in American life since 1914 constitutes "a virtual Seventy-Five Year War," wrote Robert Nisbet, the late political philosopher, in his 1988 book, *The Present Age.* It is way beyond obvious that war changes the societies of its participants, not always or entirely for the worse (the assumption that peace is the natural state of mankind can seem fragile upon reflection). Changes fostered by conflict, however, are likely to be dramatic, and Nisbet, rather despondent on the state of the union in what turned out to be his last book, observed, "All wars of any appreciable length have a secularizing effect upon engaged societies, a diminution of the authority of old religious and moral values and a parallel elevation of new utilitarian, hedonistic, or pragmatic values."

When, at last, the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month of 1918 came and with it an end to the horror of World War I, the British Empire counted a million dead, France 1.7 million. Two million Germans soldiers died, as did 1.7 million Russians, 1.5 million from the Habsburg Empire, 460,000 Italians, and hundreds of thousands of Turks.

The United States, which entered the war in April 1917, suffered far fewer casualties, of course. The first three Americans killed in combat died on the evening of Nov. 2, 1917, during a German raid on a trench held by members of the 2nd Battalion, 16th Infantry Regiment. The U.S. casualty list over the next year was 116,516 dead, 53,402 of them in battle, and 204,002 wounded in 19 months of U.S. belligerency; accidents and disease, especially the outbreak of the global influenza epidemic, killed more Americans than did bullets.

The "Great War," as it used to be called, is still a fitting description despite the vaster carnage of the rest of the century and the appalling transformations the war brought to the destinies of nations — from the grotesque tyranny of Lenin and Stalin to Hitler's National Socialism. The changes in U.S. culture, politics, and economics as a result of the first war were not as ferociously and lethally consequential as those in Germany and Russia. But the changes World War I set in motion

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here were drastic even by the standards of a country that historically has embraced rapid change and been fascinated by it. The Cold War and the recent nastiness in the Balkans, too, have echoes from the 1914-18 war. Serbia was the fuse then, of course (long ago it was said that the Balkans produce more history than could be consumed locally), and the region's current claim on our attention evokes fresh interest in World War I and makes it remarkably vivid.

"The First World War inaugurated the manufacture of mass death that the Second brought to a pitiless consummation," John Keegan writes in his new book, and "is inexplicable except in terms of the rancours and instabilities left by the earlier conflict." Keegan is one of today's premier military historians, for years a senior lecturer at the Royal Military Academy at Sandhurst and the author of a baker's dozen books, *The Face of Battle* and the recent *Fields of Battle: The Wars for North America*, among them. In *The First World War*, he concentrates on the Western and Eastern Fronts in Europe, where the most sanguinary fighting took place; he also recounts the more removed if no less significant episodes in Africa and the Middle East.

As one expects from Keegan, he navigates with clarity the politics of the colliding alliances, the refined strategic concepts which in practice were anything but refined, and the tactical inanities that heaped the bodies to obscene heights. (For instance, the French and British were dismissive at first of the Germans' heavy deployment of machine guns and continued to order packed infantry assaults, which resulted in terrific slaughter.)

Keegan is both a rigorous historian and a narrative craftsman. He avoids the "presentism" that degrades a good deal of modern historical writing — the imposition of today's standards and perspectives on the past. Thus, he carefully addresses the persistent notion of the British army as "lions led by donkeys" — that is, soldiers commanded by singularly, even criminally, incompetent generals. Some generals indeed were appallingly slow and worse. There was also, however, a technological gap between the massed firepower available and the primitive capacity to direct it in a precise and timely way. Communications were primitive, too — carrier pigeons were standard issue to units. Once the unfit and incapable were weeded out, the generals "came in the main to understand the war's nature and to apply solutions as rational as was possible within the means at hand," Keegan writes. That is not a rousing endorsement, but it is fairer than glib condemnation.

Keegan is adroit at sketching character and the interplay of personalities in the politics of the war, among both the Central Powers and the Allies. He also writes with elegiac grace when the past is resurrected through the men who did the fighting and the dying (he writes of "Tommy Atkins," the long-service, "old sweat" troopers of the Empire who collectively comprised the British Expeditionary Force at the beginning and were nearly wiped out in the early battles at Mons and First Ypres, "Their patriotism was to the little homeland of the regiment.")

Byron Farwell's *Over There* confines itself to the history of U.S. involvement

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after President Woodrow Wilson "kept us out of war" in 1916 and then reluctantly led the nation into it in April 1917. It is the tale of how America girded its loins after Germany resumed unrestricted submarine warfare and after disclosure of the Zimmerman telegram, explosive documentation of Germany's intention, should the U.S. join the Allies, to lure Mexico into war against America and thereby reclaim its great tracts in the southwest.

Farwell (he died only weeks after his book was published) briskly covers the historical landscape of America's lurch into mobilization and the young Americans who went off singing to save the world for democracy and learned the unforgiving drill of modern battle. His account is thorough and professional. (A history that mines deeper is *The Last Days of Innocence: America at War, 1917-1918*, by Meirion and Susie Harries, published in 1997).

By spring 1917, the horrendous lists of dead and wounded and missing had passed the point that either France or England could replace the numbers (never as critical a problem for Russia). Beyond the financial and materiel aid provided during the first two years of war, the most critical role the Allies envisioned for America was to supply manpower. A British-French delegation visited Washington two weeks after the U.S. declaration of war, and French Marshal Joseph Joffre insisted, "We want men, men, men." And it was the ability of the U.S. to put men in the field that would severely rattle the Germans, their own ranks irreparably thinning. By the summer of 1918, a growing malaise in the German army and a sense of "looming defeat" were attributed to "the sheer number of Americans arriving daily at the front," writes Keegan.

Although by 1913, the United States was the world's largest economy, producing a third of global industrial product, it was just as well that the Allies were depending upon the U.S. primarily for healthy bodies. America

By spring 1917, the horrendous lists of dead and wounded and missing had passed the point that either France or England could replace the numbers (never as critical a problem for Russia).

had little else to offer at its entry into the war and not much more at the end. However, "What the United States accomplished in its nineteen months of war in raising an army and navy of nearly four million . . . was nearly incredible," Farwell writes, "but its armed forces retained all the marks of a hastily put together, partially trained, amateur affair, poor in almost everything except enthusiasm."

The month the U.S. declared war, the regular army mustered 5,791 officers and 121,797 enlisted men. It ranked sixteenth among the world's armies, just behind Portugal, and remained as a secretary of the Army had described it six years earlier, "a profoundly peaceful army." The U.S.

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Navy at the outbreak of the war was less emaciated, though its combatant vessels were mostly undermanned and less than ship-shape.

"It was not until eighteen months after declaring war that the United States was able effectively to engage in the fighting in Europe, and then only because the Allies, principally France and Britain, supplied — for a price and often grudgingly — weapons, ammunition, transportation and equipment," Farwell notes with a tinge of asperity. "Most of the troops were transported to Europe in British ships, carried to the front in French trains or British and French trucks, and supplied with most of the tools of their trade by the Allies. Of the 3,400 pieces of field artillery used by the AEF [American Expeditionary Force] in battle, only 130 were American-made; of the 8,116,000 rounds of artillery expended in battle, only 8,400 were made in the United States." British historian B.H. Liddell Hart would later describe the U.S. as "a giant armed with a penknife."

Over There *succinctly details the government's vast insertion into American life. The federal intrusion was beyond any previous American experience — though it was hardly executed with stunning efficiency.*

Though the AEF saw only 150 days of combat, it acquitted itself with impressive ferocity and a willingness to take casualties to accomplish its objectives. The U.S. Marine Corps added to its legend at Belleau Wood when Gunnery Sgt. Dan Daly was said to have urged his riflemen forward into murderous fire by calling, "Come on, you sons of bitches! Do you want to live forever?" Later, Farwell writes, "Daly piously denied ever using such language." The most savage fighting in which U.S. troops took part, as a unified American army under John Pershing, was at St. Mihiel in September 1918 and during the Meuse-Argonne campaign in October-November 1918. At that point in the war, the U.S. had 42 divisions in Europe and the AEF consisted of 1.8 million soldiers.

Over There succinctly details the government's immediate and vast insertion into American life. A conscription law was quickly passed and in a population of just over 100 million, 24 million men were registered and some 3 million draftees put on uniforms. The federal intrusion was beyond any previous American experience — though it was hardly executed with stunning efficiency. "In many instances the army took control of all stages of the manufacturing process, from finding raw material to inspecting finished products," Farwell writes. Herbert Hoover's Food Administration regulated supply and consumption; Bernard Baruch became head of the War Industries Board with what amounted to "dictatorial powers."

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The federal Committee on War Information, under George Creel, cranked up a propaganda campaign that was effective, pervasive, and exuberantly jingoistic. (James Montgomery Flagg's Uncle Sam pointing sternly from a poster with the legend, "Uncle Sam Wants YOU" remains the most famous product of Creel's media blitz.) There was an eruption of distrust, and occasionally worse, against "dangerous" alien influences in a nation that had seen a tidal flow of immigration in the past 30 years. "Between April and November 1917 thousands of suspected citizens were arrested, often without a warrant, and their backgrounds checked by the Alien Enemy Bureau of the War Emergency Division of the Justice Department," Farwell writes. "While most were released, about 1,200 were placed in internment camps." When Russia limped out of the war and Lenin took power, this fevered anxiety crested in the "Red Scare" under Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer, compared to which the McCarthy furor was bush league in both method and substance. In 1918 Eugene Debs, union leader and founder of the Social Democratic Party, who spoke volubly against the war, was sentenced to 10 years in federal prison for violating the sedition provision of the Espionage Act. President Harding released him in 1921.

At the signing of the armistice at Compiegue, no Americans were present. President Wilson had unveiled his "Fourteen Points" the previous January without any consultation with the Allies, Congress, or any member of his own Cabinet. But publics here and abroad wildly cheered his idealistic flourish — and the Wilsonian agenda was blithely ignored as the peace conference carved up Europe and eagerly punished Germany. (Of the Fourteen Points, French Premier Georges Clemençeau derisively observed that God required only 10.) The centerpiece, a League of Nations, was stillborn. Twenty-one years later the bill from Versailles came due, and in a sense is still being paid in Yugoslavia.

So, IT WAS ALL a long time ago and not all that long ago. In the United States, the good times rolled, the flappers flapped and began to vote, the speakeasies born of Prohibition thrived through the Roaring Twenties, the Depression came — and, shortly, World War II. The United States was as woefully unprepared this time as last: On the eve of World War II, Farwell points out, the American army "only slightly exceeded in size that of Portugal and ranked 13th among the armies of the world." (There's the intriguing Portugal factor again.)

As after World War I, so after World War II, the U.S. demobilized with the same furious energy in which we went to war — and we were caught in our bunks, as it were, when Korea exploded five years later. Several thousand GIs paid the full tariff for that unreadiness in the first few weeks there. America's tendency to have to go to war from a standing start has a disconcerting historical consistency, and it is to be devoutly hoped that that past is not always prologue.

If, as Nisbet contends, the U.S. since 1914 has participated in a continuous war, that much was not apparent in the interwar years. Indeed, the corporal's guard to which the American military

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was reduced after the first war suggests that the U.S. was more demilitarized than active. By the end of 1919, America's regular army was reduced to about 19,000 officers and 205,000 enlisted; by 1925, it totaled 135,000. Had it not been for a core of professional soldiers who made sensible deductions from their experience in the first war and devoted their careers to keeping the U.S. from relapsing into a pre-1914 anachronism — Billy Mitchell on air power, George Patton and Dwight Eisenhower on armor, for example — in World War II it likely would have required far longer to deploy the indomitable forces America put in the field, and at a far higher cost in blood and bucks.

IT WOULD BE TOO MUCH to contend that military readiness has deflated since the end of the Cold War as dramatically as it was permitted to do after both the first and second wars. There are, however, indications that the decrease in size of the U.S. military and a continuing increase in global missions at the same time suggest a dangerous complacency or myopia.

A nation's armed forces are a reflection of the civil world. It is provocative to consider Nisbet's assertion of "a diminution of the authority of old religious and moral values and a parallel elevation of new utilitarian, hedonistic, or pragmatic values" in a society in an extended state of war. His is a distinctly despondent prognosis, and it is doubtless true. Up to a point.

There may also be correlation as much as causation in such a formula, however, in a country that habitually leaps on its horse and rides off imaginatively in all directions. Utilitarian and moral values in the U.S. historically have coexisted, if usually in straining harness, sometimes one ascendant, sometimes the other. In a land as prodigiously various as the United States, the balance is always fitful. The fractious debate over morality and spirituality in the waning twentieth century would argue that so static an equation as Nisbet's commends itself mostly to the implacably pessimistic.

There is, though, an aspect of World War I that offers itself both as a metaphor for the years since and an index of our national evolution since the first war. John Keegan brings it front and center. European military planning traditionally had been made "on the hoof," as he neatly puts it — plans fashioned only when war threatened or actually began. By the nineteenth century, though, the ad hoc quality of planning began to be "systemized." The Prussians were the innovators in establishing staff colleges, with the French and British following not far behind. War planning was elevated to a function beyond and even divergent from national diplomacy. Numerous operational scripts were minutely prepared to cover both defensive and offensive contingencies; in the decades before the first war, for example, general staffs made a point of compiling the most intricate railroad timetables for mobilization and troop movements.

The systemization of military planning could not exist in a social void, involving as it did every aspect of a nation's resources. Thus, war planning of such broad scope assumed political as well as economic and military consequences — indeed preeminent conse-

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quences once war began.

The most lasting effect of World War I in the United States has been the "systemization" of society — centralization of government power and regulation. To be sure, the experience of the war alone did not account for what has been a continuous expansion of federal authority. The Great Depression and the second war rationalized the accretion of power in Washington, philosophically pushed along by "progressives" who levitated to influential levels in the opinion-shaping leagues of academia and the press.

A central government once well emplaced and practiced, whether in the exercise of increased social or military power, does not automatically recede to a status quo ante — indeed, it resists curtailment. It is not in the nature of power or institutions to shuffle off once the moment of evident necessity has passed. The military may shrink rapidly when peace comes, but its civilian masters do not (which is further proof, if more were necessary, that the military remains subservient in American society).

For better or worse, however, it is the nature of a citizenry, or at least a functional portion of it, to acquiesce to such transformations as if somehow ordained. Each generation tends to regard the structure of power it encounters to be generally legitimate, having experienced only that status; the dissenters, for whom a freer, less trammeled vision of government beckons, will struggle to roll back the longest tentacles of the regulatory beast.

Never before 1917 had the federal government assumed such penetrating authority over the private sector. Abraham Lincoln's intrusion into civil liberties and his stimulus of American industrial muscle (muscle already poised to flex with awesome energy) were modest in comparison with those during World War I — just as Franklin Roosevelt's immense Depression-era and World War II mobilization of government management dwarfed that of World War I. World War I was a template and precedent for the future, if obviously not the only factor. Verging on a fresh millennium, America today, with three times the population of 1917, federally systemized from stem to stern, resembles the country that entered the last century as a faded photograph in an old family album.

A central government once well emplaced and practiced, whether in the exercise of increased social or military power, does not automatically recede to a status quo ante.

This is not an unrelievedly grim perspective. The strength and spirit of the United States have created a contemporary citizenry with enviably greater opportunity and choice than was conceivable a hundred years ago. Notwithstanding the apparent acclimation to a central authority that often overwhelms its constituent parts, there remains sufficiently robust suspicion of centralized authority to keep the

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bureaucracy and its political masters looking over their shoulders. And despite the continuing influence of a sometimes brittle Wilsonian moralism in foreign policy, a complementary debate over specific national interest and criteria for intervention abroad helps sustain a precarious balance.

Contrary to the blather during the Vietnam years about the arrogance of power, there is a compelling responsibility of power. The United States has accepted that burden and fulfilled it with tenacity and courage, from 1917 to now. There is a price for exercising that power, of course, and it is always more than one would wish to accept. It is to this nation's honor that, though we have flinched and often muttered, America has not defaulted — with the dismal exception of abandoning South Vietnam without the support we had pledged.

There is another legacy of World War I for which an argument can be made. Despite the rise of totalitarianism across much of Europe after 1918 and the sacrifices required to defeat Nazism and then to resist communism until the Soviet Union crumpled, liberal democracies now are the prevailing governments over most of the Continent. If it required 81 years to make a decent portion of the world safe for democracy, at a fearful cost, nonetheless safe it now appears.

Byron Farwell quotes Liddell Hart at the close of *Over There*. "The United States did not win the war, but without their economic aid to ease the strain, without the arrival of their troops to turn the numerical balance, and, above all, without the moral tonic which their coming gave, victory would have been impossible."

Judge to Justice

By Douglas R. Cox

David Alistair Yalof. *Pursuit of Justices: Presidential Politics and the Selection of Supreme Court Nominees.* University of Chicago Press. 240 pages. $27.50

Politics have always played a part in Supreme Court nominations. The Constitution guarantees as much, by dividing control over seats on the court between the political branches: The president nominates and the Senate confirms. But in recent years the political elements have become dominant, to the extent that the entire process now resembles an election campaign. Potential nominees are vetted for buried scandals and controversial positions much like political candidates. Senate hearings give the nominee the opportunity to win confirmation votes by making stump speeches, while opponents seek to elicit a damaging gaffe. Well-financed interest groups mobilize their members in order to influence wavering senators. And the media ensure that every nominee's

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views, no matter how finely nuanced, grounded in history, or bound by precedent, are reduced to a position "for" or "against" the death penalty, gun control, or some other political hot button.

The rise of politics in Supreme Court nominations is traceable to many factors. The growing importance of the federal government in American life over the past half century has guaranteed that the court would increasingly become the focus of political controversy. Expansive views of constitutional rights have led the court to address, if not resolve, many of the contentious issues of the day. The court's seeming willingness to depart intermittently from its judicial role to reach "legislative" decisions has contributed to the notion that the court functions as a "super-legislature." Justice Brennan's reported quip that the most important word at the Supreme Court was not "law," "equality," or "justice" but "five" — because that's the number of votes needed for a Supreme Court majority — surely did not help. And the cynical view that law is merely politics by other means has also inevitably tainted the process. If law is politics, then justices are merely politicians in robes, and the selection of justices is as appropriately a matter for politicking as the election of a local school board.

The defeat of Judge Robert Bork's nomination to the court in 1987 marked the triumph of the political campaign model. Liberal interest groups met to mobilize opposition to Judge Bork even before he was nominated, and used advertising, focus groups, and polling to influence the Senate and the public — just as in a campaign. Hours after he was nominated, Sen. Edward Kennedy delivered his emotional attack on "Robert Bork's America," an attack designed to enrage the citizenry over Bork's supposed retrograde positions on a host of political, not judicial, issues. Kennedy presumably would have gotten less political traction if he had merely disagreed with Bork's approach to statutory construction. That Judge Bork — a former solicitor general of the United States, respected law professor, and sitting court of appeals judge — could be caricatured and demonized in this way proved that the tools of politics could succeed in shaping the membership of the court.

In recent years the political elements have become dominant in Supreme Court nominations, to the extent that the entire process now resembles an election campaign.

Thus, in the Bork confirmation battle, the two ends of the circle finally met: As the modern court has become a forum for contentious political issues, the court has also become a political prize, with its members subject to an overtly political confirmation process. As a result, political considerations in the confirmation process have inevitably become more obvious, and confirmations have become uglier, less dignified, and less substantive. The

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struggle to confirm a nominee can now enlist the attention of millions of Americans and generate reams of commentary. The fight to confirm Bork, and the successful confirmation of Justice Clarence Thomas in 1991, continue to engender angry debate years after the fact.

INTO THIS overheated political mix comes David Yalof, a political science professor at the University of Connecticut. Yalof's new book, *Pursuit of Justices: Presidential Politics and the Selection of Supreme Court Nominees*, is driven by one key insight: The vast majority of nominees to the Supreme Court are confirmed.

That insight holds true even for the modern era of contentious, politicized confirmation battles. Consequently, Yalof argues, the really significant decisions are made by presidents and their advisors in deciding *whom* to nominate. Thus, as his subtitle suggests, Yalof shifts the focus away from the public drama of the confirmation battles, to the ways in which modern presidents, starting with Harry Truman, have selected their Supreme Court nominees — a process that Yalof labels "nomination politics."

Prof. Yalof provides succinct and informative accounts of the events leading up to each nomination in this period, along the way offering up many interesting glimpses into the process. For example, in 1987 White House officials naively believed that Bork would get even-handed treatment from the media "because of his strong support for the First Amendment." Not only Justice Sandra Day O'Connor (nominated by President Reagan in 1981) but also Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg (nominated by President Clinton in 1993) first surfaced as potential nominees in 1975, during the Ford administration. In 1971 George McGovern objected to a possible Supreme Court nomination for his Senate colleague and fellow Democrat Robert Byrd with the remarkable words, "I cannot accept a man who is mediocre, who is racist and who is unethical, for membership on the U.S. Supreme Court" — a prose portrait of Sen. Byrd that is difficult to reconcile with his more recent role as the "conscience of the Senate" during the Clinton impeachment trial.

Yalof has set himself an extremely challenging task. Acknowledging the difficulty of generalizing from the relatively limited set of Supreme Court nominations, he nonetheless deduces from the historical record various "decisional frameworks" into which he crams the vagaries of presidential decision making: an "open" process, a "single-candidate focused" process, and a "criteria-driven" process. Political science professors are evidently required to create such categories, complete with accompanying charts.

These categories may loosely describe each of the historical nominations he analyzes, but clearly there are far too many variables of personality, political pressure, and timing to be adequately summarized by a handful of broad categories. President Eisenhower, for example, is justifiably classified as a "criteria-driven" president, but his first nominee — Earl Warren to be chief justice — was selected to fulfill a political promise, and the selection "process" thus had nothing to do with the criteria Eisenhower sought to apply in other

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cases. Yalof places President Truman in the "open" category because he was prepared to consider a variety of candidates as political circumstances warranted. That categorization, however, does not quite capture Truman's highly personal approach to choosing nominees, in which he kept close control over the process and ultimately chose his nominees from among his own circle of political friends, often without recommendations from his closest advisors.

Attempting to determine how "best" to identify a Supreme Court nominee has several other inherent problems. First, it is very difficult to define or measure success in choosing nominees, other than by the obvious standard of confirmation versus rejection. Presumably, all presidents wish to influence the court, and thus to extend their views of law and policy beyond their terms in office. At the same time, presidents are often moved by other short-term goals that at the moment may appear of greater significance. How these potentially conflicting goals are balanced will affect any historical judgment about success or failure.

Eisenhower's nomination of Justice William Brennan, for example, may be classified as both a success and a failure. The president nominated Brennan, a Catholic, to serve the short-term goal of appealing to Catholic voters on the eve of the 1956 election, an election that Eisenhower won handily. Justice Brennan, of course, was far more liberal than Eisenhower and felt few constraints about voting his liberalism on the court. And he would serve on the court for 30 years after Eisenhower left office. Thus, although President Eisenhower "succeeded" in meeting his immediate goals, he plainly failed to obtain a jurisprudentially compatible nominee, and thus lost an opportunity to influence the direction of the Supreme Court to his liking.

Similarly, President Bush, horrified by the battle over Judge Bork, wanted to avoid a bruising confirmation in 1990. The president chose David Souter, who was not widely known outside of his home state of New Hampshire, and who was confirmed with no controversy and no struggle. But many Republicans view Justice Souter on the bench as disappointingly liberal, and wish the president had nominated a more tried-and-true judicial conservative. Bush evidently believed that he could not nominate a conservative favorite without risking a painful confirmation fight with the Democrat-controlled Senate. Whether political scientists classify the Souter nomination as a "success" or a "failure" depends on how those two competing goals are reconciled.

Bush evidently believed that he could not nominate a conservative favorite without risking a painful confirmation fight with the Senate.

Moreover, as Yalof acknowledges, the 1987 fight over Judge Bork represents a fundamental transformation of the confirmation process, and thus of

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the nomination process as well. Presidents must now assume that their nominees could be subjected to the same type of politically inspired and policy driven attack that was directed at Judge Bork, and plan accordingly.

Reacting to the Bork struggle, both Presidents Bush and Clinton emphasized confirmability in choosing nominees. Significantly, whereas Presidents Truman, Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Johnson all chose nominees who were politicians or executive branch officials, Presidents Bush and Clinton tried to pursue confirmability by drawing their nominees from the federal appellate courts. President Clinton clearly wished to do otherwise — he publicly stated his desire to nominate a seasoned politician to the court, and flirted with liberal Gov. Mario Cuomo as a potential nominee — but ultimately he, too, took what he expected to be the safer, surer route to a trouble-free confirmation.

THE RECENT exclusive preference for appellate judges as nominees can be explained, oddly enough, by the increasingly political tenor of the confirmation process. For better or worse, the political conception of the court and of the confirmation process now requires two things of a Supreme Court nominee. First, the nominee must be confirmable — to avoid energizing the president's political opponents. Second, the nominee must demonstrate jurisprudential compatibility with the views of the nominating president's party — to energize the president's own political constituencies, and to maximize the partisan opportunity to add a vote to what is cynically assumed to be the president's "side" of the court. That jurisprudential compatibility has become a necessity is evidenced by the extent to which Supreme Court nominations have been recurring issues in recent presidential campaigns, and can be expected to be so again in 2000.

Obviously, the goals of confirmability and compatibility will be in tension, and that tension will be greatest when the White House and the Senate belong to different parties. But to the extent those goals can be harmonized, appellate judges offer the best avenue for doing so.

Appellate judges score high on confirmability. The process of appellate judging is the closest approximation to the Supreme Court's function. They have already been confirmed by the Senate, and have already been vetted once by the American Bar Association. They often have forged ties to one or more Senators in the course of attaining the bench. Justices Souter, Thomas, and Stephen Breyer, for example, all had close personal ties with individual senators who acted as their proponents in the nomination process, and were prepared to act as their defenders (if the need arose) in the confirmation process.

Appellate judges, not surprisingly, are also good candidates to satisfy the jurisprudential compatibility goal. Their judicial opinions give the best and most accurate forecast as to their judicial philosophy and likely performance on the Supreme Court. Their opinions are evidence, in a sense, of where they would fall on the "political" spectrum of what is assumed to be a politicized court. It is possible, of course, that an appellate judge's personal philosophy as reflected in pub-

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lished opinions will be controversial, and thus cut against the overriding desire for confirmability. But even here appellate judges enjoy an advantage in comparison with potential nominees drawn from the Senate or the statehouse. Appellate judges' opinions are often narrow and technical and bound by precedent, and consequently their judicial writings will likely give less scope for critics than visionary political speeches by a sitting governor. Similarly, senators are often suggested as potential nominees on the theory that the Senate will readily confirm one of its own, but as McGovern's quote illustrates, those suggestions may be based on notions of a senatorial courtesy that no longer exists.

Other potential sources of nominees — such as lawyers in private practice, law professors, and state court judges — may present, generally speaking, a less appealing balance between the two competing goals of confirmability and jurisprudential compatibility. State court judges, for example, may rank relatively high on confirmability but relatively low on jurisprudential compatibility: They often have limited experience with the issues that arise under the federal Constitution, and thus their judicial opinions are not as satisfactory indicators of how they would perform if confirmed to the Supreme Court.

To be sure, the evident presidential preference for appellate judges as nominees is not a formula to guarantee a smooth confirmation. Both Judge Bork and Justice Thomas were sitting appellate judges at the times of their nominations but nonetheless faced determined opposition. These seeming exceptions, however, are not exceptions at all: Judge Bork was opposed for political reasons, and his opponents found their chief ammunition not in his judicial opinions but in his more speculative work as a law professor. Justice Thomas was attacked also for political reasons and from an entirely unexpected quarter. His work as a federal appellate judge simply was not a significant factor for those opposing confirmation.

Obviously, the goals of confirmability and compatibility will be in tension, and that tension will be greatest when the White House and the Senate belong to different parties.

Thus, appellate judges are uniquely well placed to meet the demands of a highly politicized confirmation process. They are viewed as sufficiently "political" to satisfy the demands of jurisprudential compatibility, but are unlikely to be so nakedly political as to jeopardize confirmability. They also carry with them other factors favoring confirmation. Even within that pool of potential nominees, presidents will find ample room for maneuver. It is a pool broad enough to provide candidates satisfactory to presidents from both parties. Other considerations that presidents have occasionally found relevant — relative youth, home state, a record of distinguished public service — can also be satisfied from the pool of

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federal appellate judges.

If the presidential preference for appellate judges continues, it is conceivable that the politics currently surrounding Supreme Court nominations will trickle down to appellate court nominations. Several factors, however, suggest that that will not happen. First, the Supreme Court by its very nature attracts public and political attention in a way that the federal appellate courts never can. The court sits at the apex of the judicial branch and, in theory at least, announces the legal principles that all lower federal courts, including appellate judges, are required to apply. The court is thus the most powerful single institution in the judiciary, and successfully opposing a Supreme Court nominee will have far greater impact than opposing a host of lower court judges. Second, because there are only nine Supreme Court justices, a change in membership of the court is a relatively remarkable event. By contrast, there are simply far too many federal appellate judges nominated and confirmed for any significant number of them to become the target of political opposition. The Senate and the public have too many issues before them to focus on appellate court nominees, on the speculative chance that one of them might later prove to be a Supreme Court candidate. Third, it is unlikely that appellate court nominees will have sufficiently incendiary records to attract much political passion: Although there is the occasional exception, most appellate court nominees have distinguished rather than colorful records, and presidents are unlikely to risk political capital to nominate someone truly controversial for an appellate court. Finally, and most decisively, senators and the public both draw a distinction between the appellate courts and the Supreme Court, and thus senators feel free to support candidates for the appellate bench and later to oppose them for the Supreme Court. Bork, for example, had been confirmed by the Senate to the court of appeals, but many of the same senators who supported him for that seat opposed him for the Supreme Court.

The next president may take some fresh approach that will lead to a successful confirmation. But it is unclear why the president would incur the risks of doing so.

It is obviously dangerous to generalize too much from the limited number of nominations since 1987. It is entirely possible that the next president will strike out boldly, and nominate a controversial candidate drawn from the world of electoral politics; or take some other fresh approach that will lead to a successful confirmation. It is unclear, however, why the president would incur the risks of doing so. More probably, the next president will simply follow the example of Presidents Bush and Clinton, and find the next Supreme Court nominee among the talented judges currently serving on the federal appellate bench.

Yalof, by focusing on nominations,

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has usefully fleshed out the historical record. Yet in the wake of the Bork nomination, presidents and the public think differently about nominations and the court. Thus it is highly unlikely that future presidents will learn how to pick confirmable nominees from the way President Truman or President Kennedy went about the job. Yalof's underlying insight remains valid: The nomination process is the often overlooked key to the confirmation process. But however great the care and foresight exercised by the next president, promising nominations will sometimes implode and confirmation hearings will sometimes take dramatic turns. Despite Prof. Yalof's able analysis, ultimately the Supreme Court nomination process remains today far more a political art than a political science.

The Arrogant Amateur

By Jay Nordlinger

Wayne C. Booth. *For the Love of It: Amateuring and Its Rivals.* University of Chicago Press. 256 pages. $22.00

Wayne Booth's *For the Love of It* is a small book that will sell few copies and delight almost all who read it. Booth had a fine idea for a book; he executed it in his halting, highly idiosyncratic way; and he left a product that those much like him will clutch to their hearts. A handful, though, will find it an infuriating book, written by an infuriating man — one who, moreover, would probably be surprised to learn that he can infuriate anyone.

He is a retired professor of English from the University of Chicago, and he plays the cello. His book is an exploration of what he calls "amateuring" — the pursuit of an activity solely for the satisfaction and fulfillment it affords. His "celloing" (another of his coinages) is at the center of it, and he asks some very good questions: What is the purpose of "amateuring," given that "full success" is "always out of sight"? And — this is vitally important — how should we spend our time? In what ways do we kill it, squander it, or redeem it?

Booth raises these and a hundred other absorbing questions, but he frequently veers off course, making room for innumerable crotchets, fulminations, and boasts. He appears to try to squeeze every last drop of himself into this modest (in one sense) volume. "We amateurs never play without a lot of talk," he concedes, and, indeed, he seems to have spent as much time analyzing and yakking about his life, musical and otherwise, as he has actually living it. He repeats himself, repeatedly. And he writes incessantly about his own writing: what he is about to write, what he has just written, what he will write chapters later. His book might have been better off as an extended essay, a pamphlet, distributed among friends and family who cherish him.

For all his formal learning — on ample display throughout the book — Booth is something of a cracker-barrel

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philosopher. He is a familiar American type: the wise, kindly, slightly gruff, somewhat New Agey older gent. There is a good deal of Robert Bly, the "men's movement" poet, in him, as there is of Charles Kuralt, Andy Rooney, Garrison Keillor, Robert Fulghum (of *Everything I Know* . . . fame), and the actor with the bushy white mustache and wire-rimmed glasses who appears in Quaker Oats commercials. You will have Booth exactly when you realize that he is the perfect reflection of the sensibility of National Public Radio. He would be a smash over its airwaves. When he writes of "my beloved bicycle," we smile in non-surprise. He is probably a world-class recycler as well.

Booth is the perfect reflection of the sensibility of National Public Radio. He would be a smash over its airwaves. When he writes of "my beloved bicycle," we smile in non-surprise.

"Musical memories are among my earliest," Booth confides; "the only rivals are of physical pains and parental punishment for sexual exploring" (a loose spirit from the start, Wayne Booth). He grew up in Utah, in a "puritanical" Mormon family, a fact that he finds frequent occasion to flog and lament. Like countless other music-lovers, he remembers his first big orchestral concert, when "[m]y closest friend, just a year before he died on the operating table at fourteen [this is a typical Booth touch], invited me to go with his family north to the big city to hear Leopold Stokowski and the Philadelphia Orchestra in the Mormon Tabernacle." Young Booth was, of course, transfixed.

With World War II, he was conscripted into the Army, where, waiting for action, he had the opportunity to listen to great amounts of music on LP: "[H]ow few are the chances," he notes truthfully, "for such totally free, fully active listening." As it happened, Booth was spared combat duty, needed back in an office for his typing skills. This turn of events brought on a crisis of faith: "I came to an absolute decision about God, for the first time since my childhood orthodoxy. It was not just a strong suspicion, but a firm rejection: any God who could play an unfair trick like this on those miserable buddies was no God at all. He had died, and along with Him the music faded." In time, however, the "music came back, blessedly, though my original God never did return." Booth is ever-eager to tout his religious skepticism. His religion, in effect, became music, an outlook he discusses with much fanfare in his final chapter, where he is at his most mystical and fantastic.

One thing there is no denying: Booth loves music; loves it madly; loves it even to the point of making an idol out of it. His book is filled with the sort of music-worship that professional musicians tend to scorn as overearnest and foolish. Yet Booth engages in a conceit: that to play badly, in the act of "amateuring," is particularly virtuous. He, with his hacking and his tears of

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joy (Booth is forever weeping in this book, demonstrating his superior feeling), is purer than thou. He alone can grasp the nobility of music. Everyone around him is baser, less appreciative, less attuned to the "spheres." Furthermore, he is the type of person — call them musical socialists — for whom chamber music is the be-all, end-all. Individual playing is selfish, cold, a little heartless. He quotes a chamber pianist as having said that he preferred to perform with others because "solo work is bare and lonely" — a perfectly legitimate opinion, but, you know: Speak for yourself, Mac.

MUCH OF WHAT Booth expresses about music is sound, if prosaic. Yet his judgments are far from unerring. He is the kind of amateur who moans about, and belittles, the use of exercises in training. He upbraids those he derides as "drillers" and resents those of his teachers who, we can infer, tried to make him a respectable player by giving him a little technique. About one of his teachers, Booth complains that "love never entered our lesson room." Maybe, but perhaps that teacher wanted Booth to know the (incomparable) joy of playing well — wanted him to love music so much that he would work to reproduce it acceptably. Booth is also cocksure in such statements as that Beethoven "surely would grieve over the number of times the theme of the fourth movement of his ninth symphony gets corrupted on TV commercials these days." Oh? Actually, Beethoven would probably get a huge kick out of it — he borrowed that tune, anyway.

Part of Booth's shtick is self-deprecation, but he seems not really to mean it. He always winds up the hero of his own stories and observations, even when he pretends, initially, to chastise himself. (Ben Franklin is said to have remarked that he was wary of being humble, because he feared he would be proud of it.) No page of this book, no twist or turn, fails to reveal something wonderful about Wayne Booth. His granddaughter says to him, "The trouble with you, Granpa, is that you're always thinking, thinking, thinking." After an unpleasant episode with a music coach, in which Booth has behaved badly, someone else assures him, "Well, you know, Rachmael [the coach] is desperate to be loved. Beneath his air of security, he is extremely insecure." Rachmael will no doubt appreciate that revelation. After quoting an example of youthful deep-think from his journal, Booth writes, "Though that bit of theodicy is clumsy, I'm still moved by it, and even a bit impressed by it" — if he says so himself.

He upbraids those he derides as "drillers" and resents those of his teachers who, we can infer, tried to make him a respectable player by giving him a little technique.

Booth seems at times unable to hear the sound of his own voice. He has a rather unseemly taste for pathos, even

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the macabre. He makes too-frequent use of his son's death, publicly working out his grief in the fashion so admired today. His wife, a violinist, once fell and broke her knee, and "[f]or weeks there was no cello or violin practice, no quartet playing. I was filled with the fear that the injury would not heal. My unspoken thought was, 'I'll have to live with an aging, crippled wife from here on.' " Why speak it now? The author is candid, yes, but also a touch creepy.

Booth seems incapable of disagreeing with someone without charging bad faith or stupidity on the other's part.

ABOUT POLITICS, Booth is even more bothersome than about music. He cites George Sand's defense of the arts, then claims that her words "might make a good retort to those members of Congress who argue that government funds should be cut from the [National Endowment for the Arts] and thus reserved for what is defensible as useful (for many of them that would be lower taxes for the wealthy)." Thus does the English Department write talking points for the Democratic National Committee.

Later, in one of his asides/sermonettes, Booth denounces the "Murdoch media" and their "suppression . . . of news about China that might hurt the boss's income." HarperCollins, it is true, declined to publish Christopher Patten's book about Hong Kong, but Booth is apparently unaware that a Murdoch magazine, the *Weekly Standard*, is the leading anti-Beijing journal in all Christendom. When the cracker-barrel philosopher gets cracking, the facts have little chance of gaining a hearing.

Toward the end of his book, Booth zeroes in on a particular villain, the man he posits as the anti-Booth (and thus as the anti-you-know-what of his book): Norman Podhoretz. For Booth, Podhoretz is the ultimate "sellout." He grossly misinterprets Podhoretz's 1967 memoir *Making It* to contend that it claims "money, fame, and power" are all that matters in life. Podhoretz, writes Booth, in a shockingly ignorant caricature, "regrets that it took him so long to discover that the greatest rewards in life come when one deliberately fights to get ahead of others. . . . That fight necessarily leads him to downgrade or even ignore such old-fashioned matters as truth, beauty, integrity, or high literary quality."

How to respond to this nonsense? Perhaps with the simple observation that service to "such old-fashioned matters as truth, beauty, [and] high literary quality" is, in fact, a neat description of Podhoretz's career. Booth seems incapable of disagreeing with someone without charging bad faith or stupidity on the other's part.

Again: This is an innocent little bunny of a book. It is almost a novelty item, to be passed out at a particularly classy county fair. How can it be so infuriating? It manages. And Booth — a bright, gifted, and, in many ways, admirable man — should trouble himself to examine why.

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The Soccer Divide

By Andrea di Robilant

Joe McGinniss. *The Miracle of Castel di Sangro.* Little, Brown & Company. 416 pages. $25.00

Soccer mania is spreading fast across the land — the national frenzy surrounding the success of the U.S. team at the women's World Cup was a powerful reminder. And despite all the hype, despite the hysteria of frazzled soccer moms and dads screaming their heads off every Saturday morning, the kids who actually play on those fields are getting better each year. They love the game, talent is blossoming, and with the help of shifting demographics in favor of the Latino population, a little brio is also finding its way into American soccer. Given the rapidly increasing pool of players, the resources, and the sheer doggedness with which Americans are mastering the game, there is no reason to think the U.S. team cannot compete with the very best, even perhaps winning the World Cup in 2006 or 2010. But at the same time, soccer in America will always be an acquired skill, a contrived love nurtured by necessity (the ultimate test of globalization?) rather than instinct. It will never run in the blood, even as the blood changes.

Joe McGinniss's *The Miracle of Castel di Sangro* serves as a useful cautionary tale. Five years ago the author awoke in the throes of an inexplicable and overwhelming passion for the game of Pelé. His doctor told him, jokingly, he had probably suffered a small stroke — one that had impaired the part of the brain which prevents Americans from fathoming the subtle beauty of an art form the rest of the world venerates. An increasingly common "ailment," one is tempted to say. But McGinniss's fixation was in a category all its own. And soon he was mumbling abstruse statistics on the Italian premier league as if speaking in tongues.

In fall 1996 he tore up a million dollar contract for a book on O.J. Simpson, set forth from his family in Massachusetts ("leaves the comforts of home," is the way the publicists at Little, Brown quaintly put it), and moved to Castel di Sangro, a little town (pop. 5,000) in a remote part of the Abruzzi, nestled between the Bitter Mountains and the Valley of the Dead Woman. Nathaniel Hawthorne once described the region as "without enough of life and juiciness to be any longer susceptible of decay. An earthquake would afford it the only chance of ruin, beyond its present ruin." A recent Frommer's guide described it more succinctly as "arid and sunscorched, impoverished and visually stark."

Not the most alluring of places, by any stretch. McGinniss, however, was on a mission and he did not amble into the town of Castel di Sangro per

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chance. He was looking for a good story on which to let his new obsession loose. And back then the Italian papers were filled with news on the team from Castel di Sangro. Against all odds, it had advanced from the doldrums of semiprofessional soccer to the Serie B, a league that was way above its station and just one step removed from the mighty Serie A, the major league of Italian soccer — by most reckonings the pantheon of world soccer.

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There was no rational explanation for Castel di Sangro's extraordinary feat. Italians saw it, quite simply, as a *miracolo*. And McGinniss arrived just as this plucky little town would have to compete with big and famous cities like Turin, Venice, and Genoa in the upcoming season. Would it manage to survive in Serie B? Would *salvezza* — salvation — follow the *miracolo*?

Castel di Sangro's predicament in 1996-97 was familiar to Italians, who often use soccer terms such as *promozione* and *retrocessione* — the upgrading and downgrading within the various leagues — to chart the political and economic course of the nation as a whole. Ever since the country was unified over a century ago, Italians have aspired to the Serie A of European nations (Great Britain, Germany, France) while fearing relegation to the dreaded Serie B. The hysteria which followed the entry of the Italian lira into the euro-zone last year, for example, sprung from the joy of *promozione* into the league of Europe's economic champions. (This year, the sluggish pace of the economy had many Italians worried about a possible *retrocessione* and hoping for another *miracolo* that would ensure *salvezza*.)

The odds in favor of *salvezza* were not good. Castel di Sangro turned out to be a rather uninspiring team trained by a conservative coach who liked to play the safest possible game of soccer, with most players bunched up in front of the home goal and one lonely forward up front waiting patiently for the ball and, presumably, for a *piccolo miracolo*. No matter. A true Italian soccer fan seldom rejoices; the real pleasure is always in the pain. And by the time McGinniss settled into his routine he was already a true believer, a besotted *tifoso* (fan) in the throes of the weekly cycles of the soccer season. Every day he rushed out to get the sports dailies, joined the training sessions, ate his meals with the team, drank and smoked and gossiped with the players until late at night (the coach had strict rules for his players: no garlic, no hot peppers, and *molte sigarette!*). On Saturdays, he was on the road with the team — to a long string of embarrassing defeats, punctuated by the occasional *miracolo* that kept hope alive. There were moments of real drama along the way, as when

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one of the mid-fielders was arrested on drug smuggling charges. And there was tragedy as well: Two of the better players were killed in a car crash.

McGinniss has a good eye for the quirky details of daily life in Castel di Sangro. The constant, obsessive chatter on the telephone, with its *ciaociaociao* leitmotiv; the sordid details of a neighbor's domestic life; the two-bit orgies organized by the team president in the neighboring village; the drama of the depressed, pill-popping soccer wives; the rituals around the dinner table at Marcella's trattoria; and the whiff of illegality wafting over everything. Especially around the silent, cigar-chomping, patron of the team, Signor Rezza, who views the American intruder with growing perplexity. There are times when McGinniss brings to mind the hackneyed old image of the bumbling American (or British) traveler who marvels at the oddities of his strange new surroundings; the effect can be slightly irritating. Still, his sketchy portrait of Castel di Sangro as a town of high-strung neurotics with a warm heart is a welcome antidote to the recent spate of best sellers peddling the phony image of modern Italy as a sun-drenched land of earthly delights.

So the raw material in the small town of Castel di Sangro is all there, one feels, for the making of a very good book. But soon enough McGinniss's obsession starts getting in the way, and his promising sketch remains just that, overshadowed by the excruciating chronicle of the author's own *dementia footballensis*. He badgers the coach about the players he should send in the field. He makes melodramatic scenes at the stadium. At night he obsesses over his computer in his dingy one-room apartment (he has covered the walls with soccer flags and scarves) pitting the Castel di Sangro team against imaginary foes. He vents his rage against the team managers by nailing vitriolic manifestoes around town — he calls them polemics — like an eccentric Martin Luther of the Abruzzi. And he becomes increasingly foul-mouthed, blurting out Italian profanities as if suddenly infected with a local variety of Tourette's syndrome.

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It turns out McGinniss is not a true *tifoso* after all but rather its American caricature. The author loses control in a way a real Italian soccer fan never would. He rants and raves and makes a spectacle of himself (one wonders, inevitably, if all the noise he makes is at least in part designed to attract the attention of Italian publishers to the book he is writing, for he is constantly giving interviews and promoting himself as well as the team he is covering). By the end of the book McGinniss is running up and down the stage and ready for the great coup de théâtre.

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Castel di Sangro loses the last game of the season against Bari. It doesn't really matter in terms of the overall standings — the team has already attained *salvezza* and therefore runs no risk of being downgraded from Serie B. But McGinniss accuses the team of having thrown the game — a rather potent charge to level against Castel di Sangro without any proof beyond a few quotes from anonymous sources. It is possible that the game was indeed fixed. Corruption in sports is nothing new in Italy (nor, for that matter, in the United States) and it has plagued Italian soccer since the earliest days. But the evidence McGinniss brings forth is slim compared to the level of his outrage. Understandably, the team managers, most of the players, and the townfolk do not take kindly to his accusation. And the book ends on a rather ludicrous note with this self-appointed American Don Quixote brandishing his polemics until he is pretty much run out of the small town that had taken him in as one of its own. Hard to believe, but at the end of it all there it is: the well-meaning American fighting it off against the wily Italians. As one Castel di Sangro player confides to the author in the closing moments of the drama, "Remember, we are the land of Dante, but also of Machiavelli."

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In the end the book tends to reinforce the great soccer divide between America and the rest of the world. Supercilious European readers will be tempted to think of McGinniss as a typical specimen of the New American Soccer Enthusiast, all bluster and foolishness. And in doing so they will underestimate the degree to which soccer is indeed taking root in this country. Yet the author's saga points to the dangers of succumbing too recklessly to an unnatural love. McGinniss is being sued by the Castel di Sangro soccer club and will have his opportunity to lay down his case in court. Meanwhile he is upset, indeed furious, because the Italian media have not rallied to his cause. He has sent inflammatory e-mails to numerous Italian journalists and editors. He has made wild accusations and warned of the dawn of a new fascist era in Italy. Which in a way brings us back to the diagnosis of his friend the physician. Something may indeed have suddenly turned on the soccer light bulbs in McGinniss's brain. But his Yankee genes have prevented him from becoming a true soccer fan. Instead, they have turned him into a fanatic. Or as McGinniss, who likes to flavor his prose with Italian words, would say: *un fanatico*.

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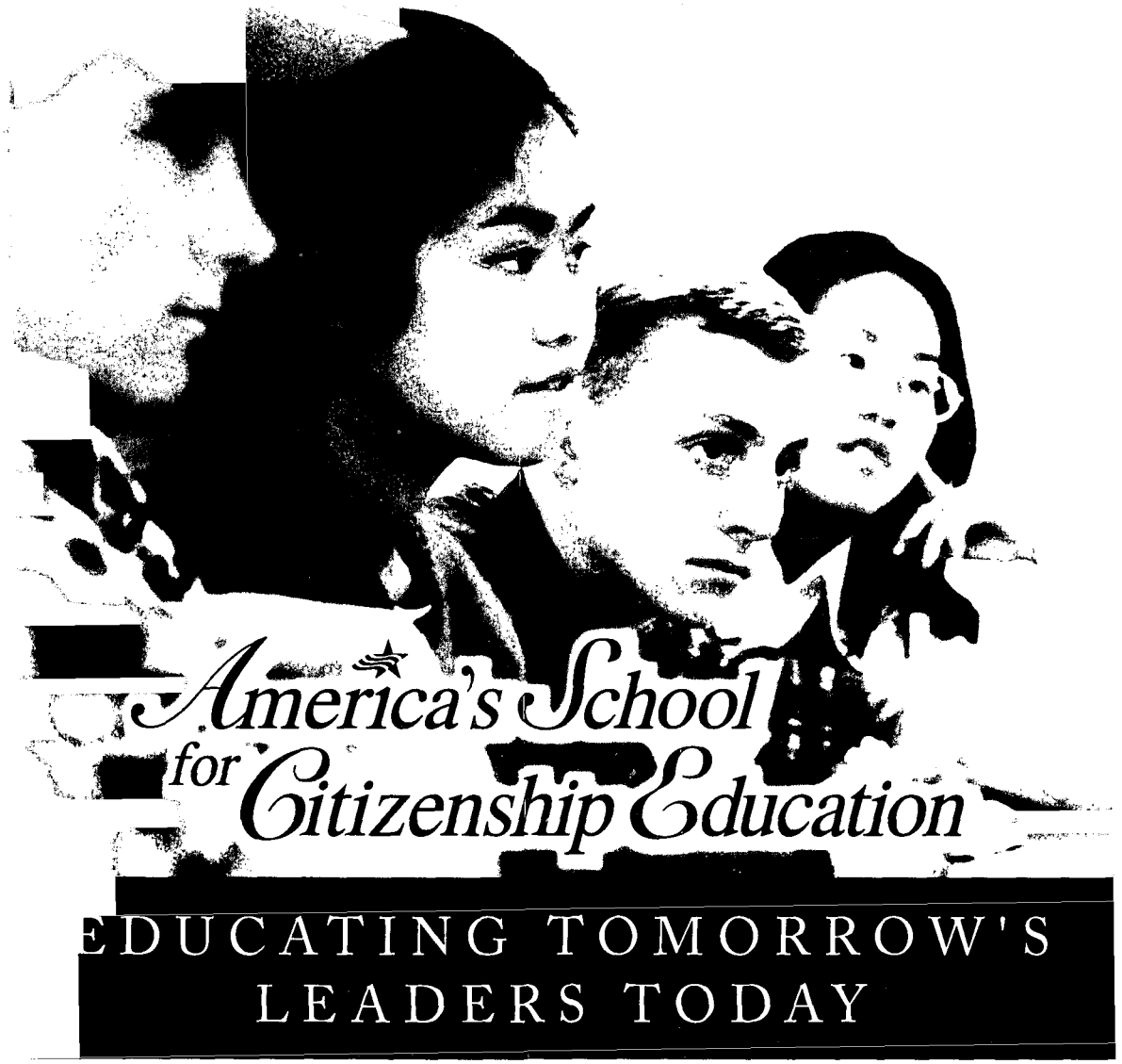

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